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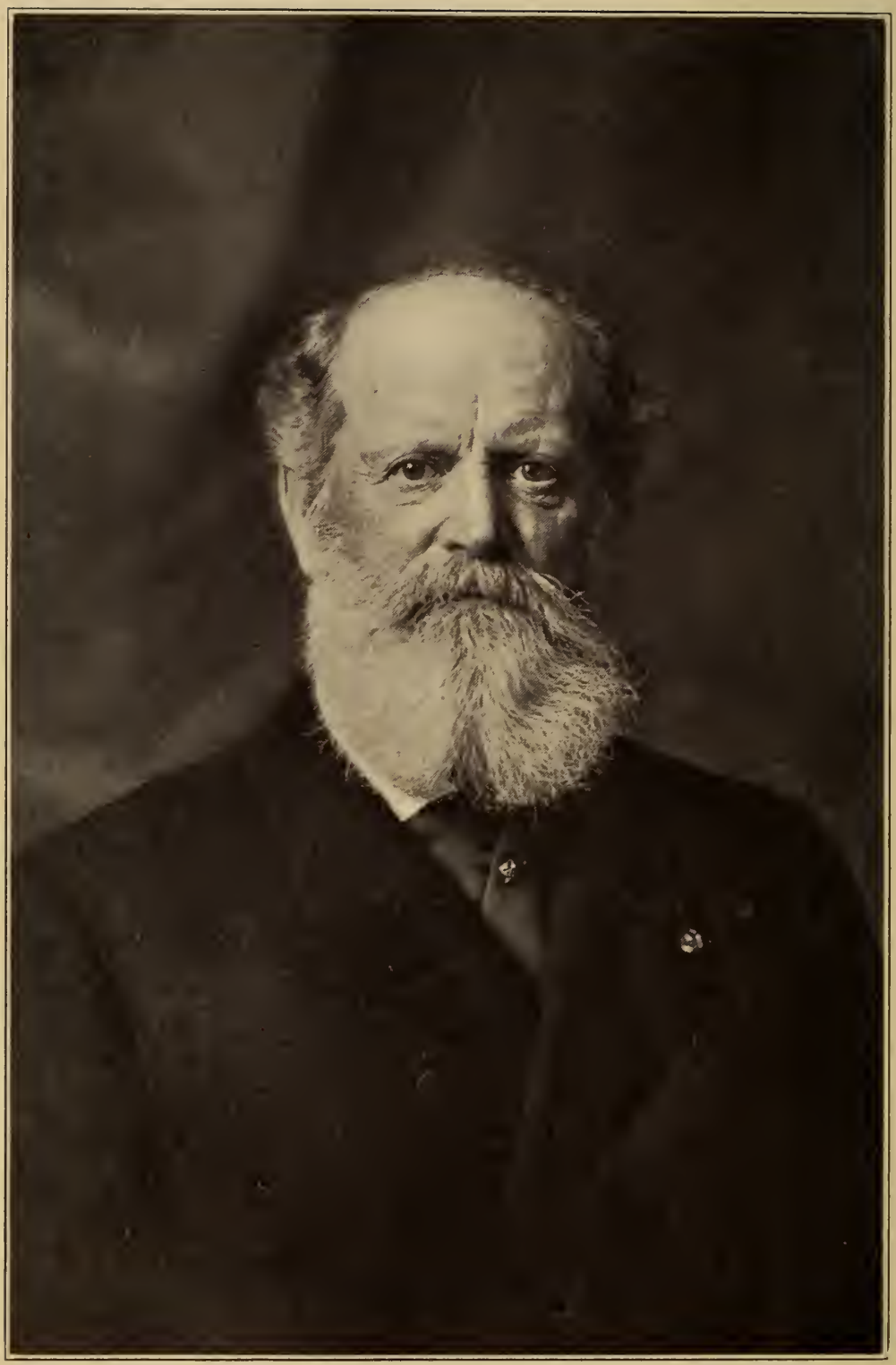

E. H. Johnson.

CHRISTIAN AGNOSTICISM

As Related to Christian Knowledge

The Critical Principle in Theology

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BY

E. H. JOHNSON, D. D., LL. D.

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the Crozer Theological Seminary, and

Author of

"AN OUTLINE OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY"
"THE RELIGIOUS USE OF IMAGINATION"
"THE HIGHEST LIFE" and
"THE HOLY SPIRIT—THEN AND NOW"

Edited, with a Biographical Sketch and an Appreciation, by

Henry C. Vedder

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From the Society's own Press

IN
GRATEFUL MEMORY
OF

Martin Brewer Anderson, LL. D.

PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER
WHO TAUGHT ME AGNOSTICISM
AND LEFT IT CHRISTIAN

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

To-day theism is better assured and theology more in question than ever before. In this state of opinion nothing can be fitter, if fitly done, than to set forth the critical and the constructive principles in theology. The former only is at present taken in hand.

These pages are not written to persuade unbelievers nor to gratify heretics—if any are still to be called by that ugly name—but for the sake of believers in Christianity who either feel impelled to search, test, and arrange Christian truth to some extent for themselves, or who ought to feel so. To the former this book may prove a comfort, to the latter a wholesome disturbance. Those uneasily suspect that in addition to the common faith orthodoxy has imposed too many extras; but these are not yet awake to any distinction between orthodox knowledge and orthodox conjecture. Those dislike and these prefer a distended system. The fact is that dilatation in theology is as threatening an evil as in heart or lungs. Reason is free to build up her systems as well as she can, but reason would never stuff worn-out guesses into the broken windows of truth. All this is presently for fuller consideration when we review the state of the case.

The arrangement of topics does not, except by chance, follow the usual order of theological discussion. It proceeds from the most intimately known to the remotest teachings of our religion.

Crozer Theological Seminary, December, 1905.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

All but the last two chapters of this book were completed, fully ready for the printer, before Doctor Johnson's last illness began. He also left a sketch of these last two chapters, and much material fully expressing his mature views, and only needing to be put in proper form. On examining this material it seemed to his friends that it was perfectly feasible to complete the book in substance as the author himself would have written it, and in his own words. The editor has scrupulously refrained from the expression of his own views, or from any modification of the author's material, other than changes necessary to adapt it to its present use. The reader may therefore be quite confident that the contents of these last chapters include the substance of what the author of the book intended to say, though, had a few more weeks of working time and strength been granted him, he would doubtless have modified, amplified, and greatly improved the form of the matter. Doctor Johnson himself esteemed this book his most original and important contribution to the study of theology—a judgment in which his editor heartily concurs.

Crozer Theological Seminary, February, 1907.

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
AND
AN APPRECIATION

Elias Henry Johnson was born at Troy, N. Y., October 15, 1841. His ancestry was of the best New England type. His father, Elias Johnson, came from Massachusetts, established himself in business in Troy and became head of the firm of Johnson, Cox, and Fuller, manufacturers of stoves. His mother, Laura Gale, was a native of Vermont. Both parents were Christians, members of the First Baptist Church of Troy, and gave their children a careful Christian training. Seven children were born to them, of whom but three lived to adult age. An elder brother, Isaac G. Johnson, was educated at Renssalaer Polytechnic Institute of Troy, where he was graduated in 1848, and in due time succeeded his father in the business, which is still carried on by his sons at Spuyten Duyvil, N. Y., under the title of Isaac G. Johnson & Co. An elder sister was the wife of Prof. John R. Long, formerly professor of Church History in the Crozer Theological Seminary, and she is now the only survivor of the family.

From his mother Doctor Johnson received his earliest and most lasting religious impressions, as well as certain others of great value to him. Both his parents were active in church work and in outside philanthropies. The mother was a woman of culture, and like Lear's daughter,

> Her voice was ever soft,
> Gentle and low—an excellent thing in woman.

Her daughter bears this testimony concerning her, "I never remember an impatient word spoken by my mother—she seemed to me absolutely perfect. She was careful of speech and never permitted herself to use a slovenly sentence before her children." From his student days, Doctor Johnson was the admiration of his fellows for his habitual use of choice English, simple, clear, appropriate to the occasion, and he owed this gift largely to the example and precept of his mother.

This mother—it is again her daughter that speaks—"consecrated her children to God, and left them so completely in his hands as to be free from anxiety herself; and they all came early in life to know and love him—Isaac at the age of six, Elias so young that he never knew when." In 1854, when a youth of thirteen, he was baptized into the fellowship of the Fifth Street Baptist Church of Troy (now the Fifth Avenue) by the Rev. Dr. Jonah G. Warren, from 1855-1872 corresponding secretary of the Baptist Missionary Union. His Christian experience, as related by him at this time, was so unlike that of the ordinary child that many who heard him believed him to be called to the work of the ministry. This conviction of theirs was so often expressed as to become a trial to him, for with characteristic scruple of conscience he feared lest he should make the mistake of being called to the ministry by man rather than by God. In time, however, perhaps from the first, the inward conviction corresponded to this judgment of others, and he even came to see, in this spontaneous approval of experienced and well-qualified brethren, the best possible confirmation of the inward conviction.

Doctor Johnson's education began in the public schools of Troy, and when the high school was established he was among those who formed its first class. After a time he was sent to Essex, Conn., to complete his

preparation for college. There he made the acquaintance of Ezekiel W. Mundy, an older lad who took young Johnson under his protection and gave him such help as a shy, nervous, bashful boy much needed and gratefully appreciated. This was the beginning of a lifelong friendship. In later years Mr. Mundy wandered far from the paths of orthodoxy, yet he has this to say of his friend: "There have been times in my life when friends were few, and when condemnation was freely pronounced on me by most of those whom I had loved; but in it all he never uttered one note of bitterness, or ceased in the slightest from showing his open friendship." And in this connection may be quoted the tribute of another old friend, classmate, and roommate at college, the Rev. William J. Leonard, now a Unitarian minister of Boston: "As widely as we came to be separated in our religious views, there was not the shadow of a change in his friendship. It takes a large soul to be so loyal as that to an old friend."

Doctor Johnson was graduated from the University of Rochester in 1862. During his course he constantly grew in the favorable estimation of his fellow-students and of the faculty. He was one of whom they confidently expected to hear good things in later years. His chief triumph as a student was the capture of the first prize for declamation at the annual contest of the sophomore class, to the general surprise, for he had not been reckoned a dangerous competitor. He remarked a few years ago, when the matter incidentally came up in a discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of elocutionary training, that the award of the prize to him was due to the appointment of an exceptional committee that year. His style of speaking then was essentially what we have all known in these later years—as far as possible removed from the florid, *ore rotundo* declamation

in vogue from time immemorial among college students; and there happened to be a committee whose members appreciated the excellence of a natural, unstrained delivery.

Doctor Johnson's health was impaired by his close devotion to study, and he was not able after graduation from college to begin at once the fulfilment of his intention to prepare for the ministry, which he seems to have formed at an early age. He could not be idle, however, and he was always a student, so he devoted the following year to the study of law—not with any idea of entering the legal profession, but as a means of occupying himself in some useful manner while awaiting the reestablishment of his health. The knowledge and mental discipline thus gained were of much ues to him in subsequent years, especially in his work as a theologian. He then entered the theological seminary at Rochester, and, pursuing his studies with his usual ardor, before the close of his junior year he broke down completely.

A strong desire to serve his country now took hold of him. This was natural to one of his ancestry, since through both parents he traced his descent to men who fought in the American Revolution, and an ancestor of his mother also served in the earlier colonial wars. His health was not equal to active service, but he obtained an appointment in the paymaster's department of the navy, and served from April 18, 1864 to August 7, 1866. By his industry, accuracy, and integrity he was able to be of as much real aid to the government as those who actually fought the ship, and he saw some active service along the Atlantic coast during the last year of the Civil War. He always wore with pride the button of the Loyal Legion.

He had hoped that this naval service would aid in the recovery of his health, but it grew worse rather than

better. He contracted chills and fever during his cruising along the Southern coast, and when mustered out he went to remain for a time in the bracing climate of Minnesota, where a cousin had charge of a mission church. In a little time an opportunity presented itself for him also to take charge of a mission field, and he decided to enter the work of the ministry without further training. He was ordained at Le Sueur, Minn., December 9, 1866, and remained there two years. This was an experience to which he afterward looked back as most valuable. He went into a new community where a minister was likely to be looked upon with a mixture of respect and contempt, unless he was both able and willing to work with his hands like other men. He has often spoken of his life there, and told incidents of his work. One reminiscence will serve as a sample: he determined at once to have a home of his own to live in, but found it impossible to hire a carpenter, and so he built his house almost unaided. As he had no great natural knack with tools, and absolutely no manual training, this feat of his speaks volumes for his grit and common sense. It also gained for him the respect of the community, and his other qualities soon so won their love that they declared he must live and die with them. It was with great reluctance that they parted with him at the end of the two years, but his health was now much improved, and this experience in the ministry had made him painfully conscious of the poverty of his resources and he was anxious to return to the seminary and complete his studies.

He took with him to Rochester another valuable possession, besides better health and avidity for learning—a good wife. He had met and loved Miss Mary Anna Lyon, daughter of the Rev. A. Smith Lyon, pastor of the Baptist church of North Oxford, Mass., and later at Newport, Minn., near St. Paul. They were married

February 14, 1867, and until her death December 11, 1904, she was indeed "an help meet for him." Her calm, placid nature was an admirable contrast to his nervous and impetuous spirit. Devoted to her friends, conscientious in the discharge of every duty, gentle, sympathetic, womanly, she was above all loyal to her husband, his constant and faithful helper. The real secret of many a man's successful career would be found, if the facts were accurately known, to consist in the tireless devotion of a wife, well content to remain in the background and rejoicing in all her husband's honors.

The three years spent in Rochester were among the happiest in Doctor Johnson's life. He was a student by nature and a student by training, and he threw himself with ardor into all the work of his course. He began at the beginning and took his junior year over again, and the note-books that he preserved show the thoroughness with which he did all his work. A permanent impression was made on his mind and character by his instructor in theology, Ezekiel G. Robinson. Doctor Robinson was an impressive man, physically and mentally. Tall and slender, his face clean-cut as a cameo and stern as that of an ancient Roman, was an index of his personality. No man was better fitted than he to arouse, inspire, and direct a young and ardent mind. Doctor Johnson was now thirty years old, a little more mature than most theologues, and the better able to respond to such influence. He was always loyal to Doctor Robinson, gratefully acknowledging his obligation to him, and in later years paid this debt in part by editing a volume published in memory of his teacher. But do not draw any wrong inferences: while Doctor Robinson was of great service in promoting and directing his mental development, and permanently influenced his thinking, Doctor Johnson was a man of too much intellectual vigor, he was too original and

independent of mind, to be the mere echo of any other. He came to differ at many points from his teacher, and took a line quite his own when, in his turn, he became a teacher of theology.

My own knowledge of Doctor Johnson—knowledge rather than acquaintance—goes back to this student life at Rochester and his service as chorister of the Second Baptist Church. It was as leader of the choir that I came to know who he was—I being at that time a student in college and an occasional attendant at that church. He undertook this service, not so much for any emolument connected with it, as from pure love of the work; and he put into it the enthusiasm that he put into everything that he undertook. He had a natural musical gift, mostly self-cultivated. He took lessons on the piano but two "quarters" in his boyhood, and found the enforced hours of practice so irksome that he was allowed to give up the lessons; and then, when he could work when and how he liked, he made more rapid progress than under a teacher. He had a fine tenor voice, and some lessons in vocal culture were given him by a teacher in Rochester. Beyond this, his musical culture was gained wholly by private study and self-discipline. He persevered until he had gained a thorough knowledge of harmony, and a wide acquaintance with musical literature; he became a composer of no mean rank, and might, had he so chosen, have gone far in a musical career. But he made this merely a pleasant avocation, and indeed pursued it in almost a furtive way for many years. He often said, "Most people think that a musician is more than half a fool, and if it were generally known that I compose music they would say that my theology must be unsound." Accordingly, a large part of his musical work was done anonymously or pseudonymously. Even in "Sursum Corda," instead of putting his own name to the beautiful

tunes that he composed for the book, he signed most of them "J. E. Henry," or "Bolivar Smith," and trash of that sort; and not all the protest and persuasion of his friends could induce him to do otherwise. The full value of his work in this and the other books that he edited is therefore known only to the initiated.

Doctor Johnson's health was again impaired by his devotion to his studies, and at his graduation from the seminary his physician advised him that only a long rest could so restore his strength as to fit him for the labors and responsibilities of a pastorate. Accordingly, he and his wife went abroad, and spent two years in leisurely travel and study. They made the usual "grand tour" and more, including Palestine in their journey—a country then visited by comparatively few, and far more difficult of access than now. During this time Doctor Johnson acquired a knowledge of the modern languages and of the German theology and theologians that was of the utmost service to him later.

Before leaving home he had preached once at Tarrytown, N. Y., where he evidently made a strong impression, for, after he had been a year abroad, the Tarrytown pastor died and the church gave him a unanimous call to become its pastor. The letter reached him at Jerusalem, but flattering as it was, he did not feel free to accept the call. He was unwilling to cut short his stay abroad, and he could not reasonably expect the Tarrytown church to wait a year or more for his return. Besides this, a characteristic scruple influenced his decision: he had preached one of his best sermons, he said, on the occasion when he was with them, and was unwilling to be judged by that. Had he preached as a candidate, he would have given them one of his worst!

On his return from abroad Doctor Johnson spent some months at Troy, still doubtful if he were strong

enough to undertake a pastorate. The church at Ballston, but a few miles distant—then a beautiful village, and now fast becoming a favorite wateringplace and rival of Saratoga—invited him to become its pastor. He declined at first, but later (November 3, 1873) accepted an offer to be stated supply for six months. The church had internal difficulties of long standing, and it was fully predicted that the young preacher's stay there would be a brief one, but he developed unexpected ability to cope with these difficulties, won the respect and confidence of all, and (February 21, 1874) accepted a unanimous call to become pastor. He might have remained here indefinitely, but he was soon in demand for larger fields.

The Brown Street Church of Providence, R. I., gave him a unanimous call February 12, 1875. The fact that his wife's uncle, Merrick Lyon, head of the University Grammar School, was a member of this church no doubt had something to do with this invitation, but that fact would not account for its hearty unanimity. The church would have called him nearly a year earlier, but he had just accepted the pastorate at Ballston, and besides, the condition of the Ballston church was then such that he would not have consented to leave it. With this Providence church he remained until his call to Crozer, in 1882. The chief event of his pastorate was the union of the Brown Street and Third churches, he becoming by unanimous choice of both bodies the pastor of the Union Church, as it was thenceforth called. During these seven years he became noted as a strong preacher. There were other able men in the Baptist pulpits of Providence. Doctor Johnson more than held his own with them and the other preachers of the city. Members of the faculty of Brown University frequently found their way to his church, for they had discovered that they always got something worth coming for. It was an advantage to

him also to be associated with these men, and he always spoke gratefully of the intellectual stimulus that he received from Professor Diman, whose death in his early prime was so great a loss to American scholarship.

Doctor Johnson, at his best, was an ideal preacher. One says "at his best," because, like all preachers and especially all extemporaneous preachers, he was unequal. Somewhat to my surprise, I have learned from looking over his papers, that he carefully wrote his sermons in the earlier years of his ministry, but after going to Providence he ceased to write and made his sermons as he went about his pastoral calls and on his walks. And as he was very faithful and conscientious in his pastoral visitations among his people, he had plenty of time for sermonizing. Macaulay could compose a long speech and afterward deliver it verbatim, without ever putting pen to paper. Much of this faculty Doctor Johnson also had, and many of his sermons and public addresses were thus carefully prepared. But some of his sermons, so far as mere expression went, were really *ex tempore,* yet in precision and elegance his spoken style lacked little of equaling his carefully elaborated writing. Another preacher said not long ago that Doctor Johnson was one of the clearest speakers to whom he ever listened, but that when he took pen in hand he lost his skill. Not many, perhaps, will agree with the latter half of this estimate, but the former half expresses the general judgment. In voice and manner he was the perfection of naturalness. Though his thought was solid, often profound, it was expressed so clearly, in words so plain and simple, and so exquisitely fit, that the uninstructed would be likely to say, "Anybody could preach like that," and continue to think so—until he tried. For here was a preacher who had attained that last triumph of art, the concealment of art.

In the midst of his Providence pastorate, Doctor Johnson received the first of a long series of calls to educational positions, to only one of which he ever hearkened. The chair of Ecclesiastical History in the Rochester Theological Seminary became vacant in 1877 by the death of Professor Buckland. From his student days at Rochester it had seemed to his instructors that Doctor Johnson was peculiarly adapted to be a teacher. He was the first choice for this vacancy, and received a call that was not only hearty but urgent. Not all the arguments and advice of those whose judgment he greatly respected could convince him that this call was a call of duty. He felt at that time no strong inclination to the work of teaching, but rather all his impulses and preferences were to continue as preacher and pastor. And even if he were to become a teacher, he did not feel that the chair of history was one for which his gifts and acquirements fitted him. In this judgment he was no doubt correct. He would not have failed as a teacher of history—Doctor Johnson was not the man to fail at anything that he seriously undertook—but he would probably not have achieved the eminent success that was his as a teacher of theology. His own good sense and the providence of God guided him to the right place at the right time.

Coming to Crozer in 1882, at the same time with Dr. James M. Stifler, the accession of these two men to the faculty was a very great advantage to the seminary. Comparisons are always odious, and I will make none; but it is doing no injustice to any to say that Doctor Johnson from the first proved himself an invaluable member of the faculty. He was always alert for possible improvement. He always favored any measure that would advance the general welfare of the institution, raise its standard of scholarship, increase the effectiveness of its instruction, or promote the piety of faculty and students. He

never wavered in his loyalty to Crozer, and he showed that none of those who looked up to her as their *alma mater* could do or would do more for her than this son by adoption only. He had an eye single for his work here, and nothing else had any attractions for him, as he showed by declining many flattering offers elsewhere, including the presidency of two other institutions.

In the early period of his seminary labors he was prodigal of his strength, being a frequent and always a welcome preacher to the churches about Philadelphia. To the Upland church, of which he was a member, he gave a service that was both exceptional and notable. For a year after the retirement of Doctor Pendleton, he was acting pastor of the church, and devoted himself in his whole-souled way, not only to the preaching, but to personal work. A great revival occurred during that year, one of the most remarkable in the history of the church and community. Doctor Johnson, with his usual modesty, always declared that he had little to do with it, beyond merely preaching on Sundays and baptizing the converts, but from many of the latter have come since his death testimonies of his earnest and faithful private conversations with them, which resulted in their giving their hearts to Christ. He baptized about one hundred and fifty that winter, among them a number of young people who are now deacons and leading workers.

In his later years Doctor Johnson was compelled more and more to restrict his work of preaching, and failing strength at last constrained him to confine his labors to the classroom and the study. His friends noted these indications of declining physical power with regret, but scarcely with apprehension, until the very last. The prolonged illness of his wife, who for more than a year before her death was gradually failing, was a great strain upon one so nervously organized as he, and permanently

impaired his reserve force; but during the spring and summer of 1905 he so far rallied that his friends hoped his life and labors might be continued for years to come. On September 2, 1905, he was united in marriage to Miss Lillian Morgan, a woman in every way fitted to be his companion and helper, and he began his new seminary year with every prospect of continuing for a long period his professional labors.

As winter came on, his increasing weakness became noticeable, and after the Christmas holidays it was apparent that only his indomitable will kept him in his wonted place. Even when he became finally unable to walk from his house to his classroom, he insisted on doing his work, and had his classes meet him in the parlor, until his physician advised him to desist. About six weeks after he was thus compelled to surrender to the inroads of disease, the end came on March 10, 1906.

The large and representative attendance at the funeral service in Commencement Hall attested the honor in which he was held in the whole community; and many members of the Philadelphia Ministers' Conference showed by their presence the place that he held in the hearts of his brethren at large. The service was severely simple, as he himself would have wished. The choir of the First Baptist Church of Chester, to whose training he had devoted much time for several years, as a labor of love, sang some of his favorite hymns; his pastor Walter Calley, D. D., made a brief and appropriate address; Doctor Weston offered a fervent and touching prayer; and all that was mortal of Doctor Johnson was borne to its last resting-place at Troy, N. Y., where the others of his family also lie.

The principal work of Doctor Johnson's life was that done in his classroom. This is the judgment that he

would himself have wished to be passed on him. His work as a teacher was, to him, not one of many activities—it was literally his vocation, the high calling of God; all other things were avocations. To his students he gave not merely the best of himself, but all of himself. His classroom methods were the fruit of experience, thought, and deliberate choice, and justified themselves by their results. He was convinced that the mental discipline necessary to one who would succeed in the ministry cannot be attained by merely listening to lectures—the so-called "university" method—but requires for its foundation the absolute mastery of an outline of theology, through the process of daily study and daily recitation. This is considered by many in these days an old-fashioned method, not to say outworn; but he chose it deliberately, was fully convinced of its effectiveness, and was unmoved by the occasional criticism of casual visitors who had not taken the trouble either to understand his method or to inquire into its results. His best vindication will be found in the twenty-three classes graduated under his instruction, and in their testimony to the value of their training in his classroom.

As teacher and as theologian, Doctor Johnson was a singularly fortunate combination of qualities. His mind was, to use Huxley's famous phrase, "a clear, cold logic engine, with all its parts of equal strength, and in smooth working order," but he had also a heart sensitively alive to all religious emotions. He had all that openness of mind, that eager welcome for new light, that zealous searching for the truth, which is supposed to be the exclusive possession of the radical, and along with this the confidence in the wisdom of the past, the attachment to the truth that has borne the test of age-long sifting and discussion, which is the mark of the conservative. He made clear and sharp distinction, and insisted that others

should do likewise, between what we know in theology, as the content of revelation or experience, and what we assume or infer or guess. He insisted on the value of the revelation that God has given us in nature and in human history, as well as that contained in the Scriptures. His alertness of mind was unfailing. He was interested in all the current movements of thought, in the latest discoveries and theories of science, the newest phases of philosophy, kept himself informed concerning them, appropriated whatever was valuable in them and made all learning tributary to his work. There was thus a breadth, a solidity, a lucidity, an up-to-dateness about his thinking, a saneness and largeness in his conclusions that greatly commended his work to all competent hearers and readers. Though sometimes compelled to dissent from his conclusions, such never failed to respect them, nor to admire the candor and fairness and courtesy, as well as the ability, of their presentation.

This leads naturally to a mention of his theological writings. Neither of his "Outlines of Theology" takes a high place among these, because they were never intended to be more than their title claims, outlines. Though published, they are not for the public. They are text-books, just that, only that. Though every sentence in them is clear as crystal, they cannot be properly understood apart from the lectures by which they were accompanied in their classroom use. His most valuable theological writing is his contributions to the theological reviews and the books published during his later years. Of the review articles, the most notable was that on "The Idea of Law," in the "Baptist Review" for July, 1888. He himself considered this his most important contribution to theological thought, and it was fundamental in his system. The essay is about ten pages long, yet no more original and valuable offering has been made

to systematic theology in the last generation of American scholars. Other notable review articles were:

"A Review of Doctor Strong's Theology," "Baptist Review," October, 1890.

"The Bible's View of Atonement," "Baptist Review," October, 1891.

"Conservative Apologetics," "Andover Review," November, 1891.

"The Basis of Atonement," "Seminary Magazine" (Louisville), November, 1893.

"A New Method with an Old Problem," "Bib. Sac.," July, 1894.

"Competence of Imagination to Serve the Truth," "Bib. Sac.," October, 1900.

"The Baptist Position of To-day," "Baptist Review and Expositor," April, 1905.

The volumes on "The Religious Use of Imagination," "The Highest Life," and "The Holy Spirit," will long maintain for him an honorable place among the theological writers of our country. The intrinsic interest of the thought, the keenness of logic, the precision of expression, the reverent and scholarly use of Scripture, the aptness of illustration—these are the combination of excellences that would make noteworthy any book on any subject, but so rare in theological literature as to be in itself a remarkable phenomenon.

Besides these more serious writings, Doctor Johnson was a prolific contributor to the denominational and religious press. "The Examiner," "The Watchman," the "National Baptist," the "Religious Herald," the "Western Recorder," the "Standard," among our denominational papers, frequently contained articles from his pen, and to the "Independent" he was also a frequent contributor. A considerable proportion of these articles were pseudonymous, and dealt with ephemeral subjects, neither

of which facts however made them less widely read when published or less influential. Many of these articles were sportive, written for the pure fun of the thing, yet almost always they have a serious purpose, or at any rate a sharp point (not a sting) in the tail of them. Those who were not in the secret of their authorship never quite appreciated the vein of wit and humor in Doctor Johnson, rigorously repressed when he considered himself on duty, in the pulpit or classroom, and only shown to intimate friends in his hours of relaxation, but contributing to his personality one of its chief charms. On the other hand, not a few of these articles contained the results of his best thinking and most careful expression, and became the germs of the books to be written later. Not a few were the product of a labor that would be incredible to one who had not seen the process.

Genius has been defined as a capacity of taking infinite pains. No man better deserved to be called a man of genius in this sense than Doctor Johnson. And he was the last man to be suspected of this virtue. With his nervous temperament, his overmastering desire to bring things to pass *now,* his impatience of all delay, his intense energy of achievement, one would have supposed his literary method to be the dashing off of his first thought and sending it to the printer before the ink was dry. And the first part of the presumption would have been justified by the fact in innumerable cases. When the idea of an article took hold of him, he had no rest until he had put it into words. To brood over it for days before putting pen to paper was impossible to him. He would rise at a positively immoral hour in the morning, and before I had finished my breakfast he would come to read me what he had written. But this haste in first composition was quite compatible, in his case, with prudent and often prolonged consideration, polishing, rewriting;

and sometimes the article would go into the waste-basket after all. I have known him to rewrite three times an article of no particular importance (as it seemed to me) before it suited his fastidious taste, and nearly every chapter in his published books was rewritten several times. Once when, after reading to me an article, he said doubtfully, "I believe I shall have to write that again," I protested, "What's the use? That is good enough now." And his response was, "Nothing is good enough, if I can make it better."

From early childhood to the very end, he had a peculiar delicacy of organization, both physical and moral. Physically, this took the form of an extreme nervousness, amounting almost to a disease, which was the secret of both his strength and his weakness. This temperament explains to those who knew him his facility in acquiring knowledge, the acuteness of all his mental processes, the esthetic sensibility that made him so susceptible to beauty in all its forms. It was also the ground of those impulsive, erratic, eccentric elements in his thought and action that constituted so large a part of his individuality. He was less capable of methodical, continuous labor than many, but there was full compensation in his prolific energy while he worked. His moral delicacy and sensitiveness quite matched the physical. For the impure, the coarse, the brutal, he had an instinctive and violent repulsion. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are righteous, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, on these things he habitually thought, because in them he found his affinity.

Doctor Johnson was a friend of friends. He knew how to be familiar and intimate without loss of dignity, but in his dignity there was nothing of either pomposity or coldness. There was an element of boyishness in

him that often appeared in his leisure hours, and a spirit of comradeship that made him a delightful companion. His loyalty to his friends could not have been surpassed, and has seldom been equaled; at any cost to himself he would serve them, stand by them, defend them. Indeed, he would do this even for those who had no special claim upon him, out of pure chivalry. The only serious fault in his character or conduct was merely the excess of this virtue. Every unpopular cause found in him a defender, every "under dog" in a fight might count confidently on his sympathy and championship. And so he was sometimes betrayed into defending men and causes that to his best friends seemed not worthy to be defended. But how few men there are who commit their worst errors because they are too good! Most of us avoid his fault all too easily, because we have not a tithe of his virtue.

Though extremely sensitive to criticism or abuse, Doctor Johnson deliberately incurred odium more than once, by attempting to right what he considered intolerable wrongs. For many years he was believed in our denomination to be a dangerous heretic, although his theological views were always strictly conservative and strictly orthodox, because he ardently defended in season and out of season the right of others (who perhaps might have been justly called heretics) to utter their opinions freely. The maintenance of freedom of speech seemed to him of more importance than the maintenance of orthodoxy, because orthodoxy did not need maintenance. If freedom were secured he had no fears for orthodoxy; given a fair field and no favor, he was confident that the truth would always come to its own. It was in pursuance of this idea that he advocated the establishment of the Baptist Congress, and it was mainly due to his untiring efforts that the Congress became one of our recognized Baptist institutions.

It will be easily believed, therefore, that one of the most prominent traits in Doctor Johnson's character was his unselfishness. Few men fulfil so completely the apostolic injunction, "Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others." Self was not the center of the universe to him, as it is to so many, even of those who call themselves Christians, even of those who are called Christian ministers. He was never known to resent an injury to himself, or even to speak unkindly of one who had injured him, though his friends have often witnessed his hot indignation when he saw others injured. Some men so identify themselves with their opinions that they take it as a personal insult if anybody presumes to criticize or oppose any opinion or measure put forward by them. Not so he. He was an ideal colleague in the seminary faculty, because of this unselfishness. He had his own opinions as to what should be done or left undone, opinions not adopted without good reasons, opinions urged with strong arguments, but when he was unable to convince his colleagues, as sometimes happened, he always yielded to their judgment—and what is more difficult by far, and therefore more rare, he yielded with a good grace, cheerfully acquiescing in their decision. Even when some pet measure of his own failed to commend itself to the rest, there was not the slightest irritation shown, and his fraternal regard for those who had offered the strongest opposition never showed the least alteration.

Being unselfish he was also generous. He gave his money freely, and what was better he gave himself. The friends of Crozer all know, in a general way, what he did to beautify the grounds, but only those who have been there many years know at what expense the present beauty of the campus has been attained—and by "expense" is not meant the mere expenditure of money,

though that has been no small item, but of time and thought and loving, painstaking care. In this, as in so many other ways, he has made the seminary his debtor forever. He did much—more than students have ever suspected—for their welfare. The organ that for many years led in the worship of song, the books from which all sang, were his personal gift. Every year the library was enriched by books that there were no funds to buy, in some years to the number of fifty or more volumes. When the president has been at his wit's end to provide the necessary funds for the help of deserving students, Doctor Johnson has come to his aid. Nobody but Doctor Weston knows how frequent and how large these gifts have been, and he will never tell, but that they have been considerable and most helpful at critical times several others know. He is known to have educated several young men and women, and how many more cases there were of which his closest friends never heard one can only guess, for he was one who never spoke of such things, and what we know we learned by accident. Such men as he

> Do good by stealth and blush to find it fame.

May one add a yet more personal word? When I became a member of the Crozer faculty, I received a welcome that still warms my heart whenever I think of it. Doctor Johnson's was not more hearty than that of others—that would have been impossible—but it was peculiar to himself. We had been acquaintances, perhaps I might even say friends, since his early days at Providence, but he now received me to an intellectual companionship such as I had never known, and closer than I have had with any other man. For the last ten years we had made a practice of reading to each other all our writings, for

criticism and suggestion, before offering them to a larger public. Soon after my coming here I learned to ride a bicycle—he had been a devotee of the wheel for some years—and on pleasant Saturday afternoons we scoured the country all about, until there was hardly a highway, whether well-traveled road or shady lane, that we did not explore. In these hours we came very close to each other; I saw a side of his nature that otherwise might have remained for me a closed book. In most unrestrained fashion we discussed everything in the heaven above or in the earth beneath or in the waters under the earth, of which either of us imagined that he knew anything; and better than from any published writing or public discourse I learned in this friendly intercourse to admire the rich stores of his learning and the accuracy of his information, and to respect and love his greatness and gentleness of heart. Some men lose by being seen at close range. Doctor Johnson always gained. There was in his nature something of womanly tenderness, but much of manly strength. His piety was unostentatious, but genuine, deep, and of the practical order. Though a man peculiarly sensitive to all emotion, he distrusted emotionalism in religion. His faith in God was strong, yet he did not believe it possible for man to have immediate knowledge of spiritual things. Mysticism, in all its forms, received no quarter at his hands. His mental constitution was that of a rationalist, and he could find no rest for the sole of his foot but on the solid ground of rational proof. Without his faith in God and his personal experience of divine grace, he might easily have become an agnostic, like Huxley or Spencer; with his faith and experience he was the strong, well-equipped, fecund Christian theologian.

His religious character was most clearly manifest in his prayers. His people at Providence recognized this and

have often spoken of it. Those who have so often heard him in the Crozer chapel noted it. His prayers were never emotional; they lacked what some call "unction," which is too often mere religious sentimentalism, and not infrequently descends to a familiarity as disgusting as it is vulgar. In his prayers there breathed a profound reverence for God, a deep sense of sin and unworthiness, but with these a faith in the love and atoning sacrifice of Christ that nothing could shake, and a trust in the forgiveness of sin through him. Withal, there was expressed manly determination to be faithful to duty, to brace the will to fruitful endeavor, to count no service too lowly. And these thoughts, hopes, aspirations were expressed in a voice so quiet and restrained that some might at first think him cold, in a diction as perfect as chiseled marble, and yet they always seemed the spontaneous outpouring of his heart, the utterly appropriate voicing of his thought.

Let us sum up briefly Doctor Johnson's claims to lasting and grateful remembrance, not only by us who have been closely associated with him, but by the whole Baptist brotherhood at least. By his fidelity and ability as pastor and preacher, he did a work for our churches surpassed by few men of his generation. By his discussion of public questions in the press, by his valuable counsel on critical occasions, by his initiative in organizing the Baptist Congress, he left his impress for good on the history of American Baptists during the last half-century. By his musical compositions and his editing of hymn books he did much to elevate the standard of musical taste in all our Baptist churches and greatly enriched the worship of God in song. By his articles and his books he made contributions to theological thought of striking originality and of permanent value. By his instruction in the classroom he stimulated hundreds of young men

to think through for themselves the great questions relating to God and religion and duty, while the quiet influence of his character taught them that honest search for truth and the brave facing of every fact is not incompatible with steady orthodoxy. And so, in this time of theological unrest, many minds have been steadied and many timid souls have learned a more robust faith from his precept and example. These things measure a lifetime noble in aim and rich in achievement.

Doctor Johnson's life was fortunate in many ways. He was fortunate in his ancestry, inheriting traditions of patriotism, of useful citizenship, of high Christian character. He was fortunate in never feeling the pinch of poverty, nor yet being exposed to the temptations of great wealth. He was fortunate in having opportunities for the most thorough education, under the direction of peculiarly able and inspiring teachers, in having as his lifelong friends men and women of culture, in enjoying the broadening influences of travel at an age when he was mature enough to appreciate them fully and plastic enough to be affected by them most deeply. He was fortunate in being given the work for which he was best fitted, and which he most ardently desired to do. He was supremely fortunate in his death, able to work almost to the very last, and being spared the bitterness that comes to many a man of lingering along in a state midway between death and life, until his fellows almost forget him and his accomplishment, and he is himself acutely conscious that he has outlived his usefulness and his fame. In the plenitude of his powers, at the zenith of his activity, with his fame undimmed, followed to his grave by the grateful remembrance and the keen regret of all who knew him, he has finished his course, he has gone to his reward, to be forever with the Lord whom he loved, the Christ whom he served.

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I

THE SITUATION

I

THE SITUATION

1. The Predicament

CHRISTIAN theology ought to do for the Christian religion a twofold service: it ought to distinguish what Christians may claim to know from what with more or less probability they only infer; and it ought to apply with thoroughness the scientific conception of law in studying and systematizing the accredited facts. A Christian agnosticism I take to be the critical principle, and the idea of law the constructive principle in Christian theology.

Not that criticism and construction can be kept apart. We must examine the timbers before we build them into our house; and, on the other hand, a critical mind is more than a well-arranged lumber yard. When it looks over the ideas which are its possessions, it sees not only which go together, but also more or less how they go together. Still, the critical process must come first; we must make sure of our truths severally before we set up our system.

There are signs that, although so much was painfully wrought long ago, just this critical work was not done thoroughly enough; at least that for our day it must to no small extent be done over again. Theology has been overloaded. She staggers under her burden. To relieve her is the part of a friend. Thieves and robbers would not be careful to distinguish between her necessaries and her incumbrances. Not that she will wish to be relieved. She may take as grossly presumptuous any attempt at easing her load; especially as a good many have tried with rough or smooth words to make

away with all of it. For theology has been at great pains, and it has taken her a long while to make up all these packages. She has grown used to the load, loves the familiar burden, the accustomed harness. The demurest "brindle" in the pasture would miss the bell that jingles at her throat, and we Western men cannot walk as gracefully as John Chinaman does when without the customary heels to our shoes. The most that theology's nearest friends have ventured is to make the burden fit a little easier, so much easier that they may add to it. Surely and surely it is a friendly act to find out whether the burden may not be made less cumbersome, however hotly theology may object.

Theology has paid heavily for her presumption. To say nothing of the inner light, she has held equally to what the Bible teaches and to what has been inferred from the Bible's teaching. This might seem reasonable enough providing the inferences are logical; but one needs to know little about what has gone on among students of the Bible to be aware that the most exasperating contradictions have sprung from those laboriously logical inferences. Whether doubt of the inferences properly grows out of the nature of the topics reasoned about we may presently consider; but it is meanwhile presumable that the topics are of such a nature, since the results are so contradictory. Perhaps the fault is in the book itself. Is it not certain that some will think so? Will they not say that you can prove anything from the Bible? Whether this too is fair or not we shall have to consider after a while. At present let us mark how theology is embarrassed. Confidence in her work is pretty nearly extinct, especially on the part of the multitude. The multitude could not be expected to discriminate where theologians did not, between what the Bible plainly teaches and what may be guessed from its plain

teaching; and so the multitude has come to regard all theology as idle conjecture. How do otherwise? Not that the people reject the Bible, but that they distrust theology. We ought to keep ourselves alive to the fact which we are ready enough to cite against an opponent, namely, that the teachings of the Bible are *in large part* of such a nature as to make inference from them, however logical in form, sometimes improbable and always uncertain.

As long as theology refuses to tolerate against herself any distinction between what the Bible teaches on themes too high for us and what she deduces from that teaching; as long as there is no getting theologians to agree what those deductions ought to be; as long as the inferences notoriously follow the tastes, idiosyncrasies, and even social alliances to which the theologian is born, so long may it be accounted thoroughly sagacious in the multitude to be more discriminating than theologians, and to keep alive faith in the Bible while showing distaste and even impatience for formal theologizing. The process of deducing doctrine from doctrine, the process which led to the scandalous trivialities of scholasticism, and to the overbold cliff-climbing of Protestants, is after all plainly a bypath. Not all could feel bound to follow it.

But there is quite a different method, less popularly appreciable, but which has discredited theology as much as though it were comprehended. This is a method which opens the entire field of religious truth at once. It assumes some broad philosophical principle, with or without evidence for it, and offers it to faith as interpreting all the great truths of Christianity. Why not travel this wide boulevard straight across the whole region of religious truth, visible on either side? What is amiss with it? Is it not precisely the way of science to frame an hypothesis, and prove it by showing how all

the facts fit into it? Must not science proceed after this fashion or not at all? Yes, indeed. Why, then, is not this method as safe in theology as it is imposing? Would not large principles, which are neither self-evident nor capable of direct proof, be proved sufficiently for Christians when the great doctrines of Christianity are shown to bear interpretation by them? No. We might expect it to be so, but experience proves that it is not so. The trouble is that the grand teachings of Christianity have seemed to fit into too many large principles in turn. In the end it has appeared that neither the large philosophical principles assumed have been able to hold their ground, nor have the truths of Christianity one and all been so well expounded by these means as was at first supposed. Illustration? Every system of theology which the reader happens not to believe in he will find a case in point. We shall have so many illustrations of this magnificent mistake that it would not be worth while just now to do more than state the case in general terms. As to big philosophical notions as interpreters of all religious notions the predicament would seem bad enough. Put it thus: has the final philosophy been reached? Who can say so until the philosophers agree on it, and hold to it for a century or two? For the present, with the experimental psychologist, Ribot, we may do well to care less for great systems than for little facts.

And yet it is vain to propose an arrest of doctrinal development. Men are bound to think over what they care for. It is hard to understand in spiritual men such indifference to spiritual things as to give up all discriminating thought about them. We cannot continue Christians without holding to views which make us Christian. The predicament then is that we must ourselves go on thinking, although we profoundly distrust other men's thinking. Who can have much confidence in his own

notions while this state of facts endures? Is it not as clear as night makes the sudden sunrise of the equator that the predicament can be relieved only by more careful recognition of what is in nowise known as well as what is fully known, by unsparing discrimination between what is thoroughly understood and what is so imperfectly understood that we cannot reason from it? Christians need a Christian agnosticism.

2. The Profit

All sorts of good would come of a well-considered attempt to relieve theology of her superfluities. To admit and stand to it that we ought not to put our inferences on the same footing as the express teachings of Scripture would be an edifying display of theological modesty. So much to begin with. I do not know of any group of thinkers which might not be adorned by a little more of this quiet grace. The holdbacks and the pushers-on are now and then quite alike in theological audacity and inventiveness. Let who will count the conclusions which have been far drawn and riveted together by orthodoxy until to tear away one item would be to break up the whole concatenation; and when he is disgusted and outraged by this inveterate habit of the old theology, let him turn his criticism upon the newest theology and see whether it is not quite as extravagant in deduction, even more reckless in claiming as Christian what has never been agreed to by Christians, or whether it ever hesitates to put forth as biblical an engaging novelty which expressly contradicts the plain teachings of the Bible. Both parties are immodest enough to make the Bible responsible equally for its teachings and for their own inferences from its teachings. But is it fair to say of any man that he holds what you think his avowed opinions logically lead to? This may be a way of dis-

crediting his opinions, but it is not the way to make out what they are. Every one can see that the effrontery of unfairness is one of its most odious characteristics, while modesty, on the contrary, at least seems to be fair.

And so theological modesty would be rewarded by firmer confidence in the teachings on which it ventures. The theologian himself as well as those he addresses would gain in confidence. Due caution leads to due courage. And as effrontery is by no means true courage, so modesty is far from being timid, or from inviting timidity. Assurance of faith is won by humility in speculation. The widespread incredulity and dislike with which Christian doctrine is regarded by many Christians would be disarmed if the pretensions of inferential theology were lowered. How essentially bold religious belief is can hardly be more conspicuously displayed than by its efforts to keep up with the audacities of speculation. But such a display of courage belongs to other days rather than to ours. Faith is now so regularly challenged at every step that it is recklessness and folly to take needless risks. Let something be done to warrant courage. Courage is perhaps always safer than cowardice. Courage faces down some risks, cowardice creates many risks. A vicious horse may be hard to manage, but a frightened horse is frenzied beyond control.

And one can hardly imagine in our time a greater peril to religious truth than timidity. Not to ask too much from faith is to strengthen faith where faith is most in need of support. For instance, if instances are needed, a fundamental position of theism and an extreme claim of Christianity each exemplifies the encouragement which abstinence from speculation assures to faith. The theism of our day cannot content itself with the picture of a Deity who keeps his hands off; it holds that God constantly keeps his hand in. But theism is only embarrassed by the

persistent and contradictory attempts of theorizers to explain how God does it. Similarly the Christian quite characteristically holds that his Master was divine; but he so holds in spite of the discouraging failure of all the well-known explanations as to how he could be both divine and human. The fresh leaves of springtime, as some one has remarked, push off the wilted leaves which all the winds of winter did not pluck away. New theories crowd off old ones; but the next season they too must fall. Meantime life is in the tree, and it is life which effects the changes that violence could not bring about. Life has confidence in itself; only let not life be embarrassed by fantastically tying back or gluing on the leafage it once has shed, nor even by doubting that it will find some way to turn to account all which the present season spreads over the branches. To be cautious, this is to be courageous.

And so we can see how to admit that our speculations amount at most only to probabilities, is to win freedom for speculation. Its topics are inviting and its methods are harmless, if only their indecisiveness is felt and acknowledged. The invitation of its themes is irresistible. They are the loftiest and most engrossing on which the human mind can be engaged. Poets and philosophers dilate on them as eagerly as do theologians; they have proved as inspiring to the artist as to the preacher. But it is high time to distinguish between what we may freely hold as likely and what we may legitimately announce as certain. It has caused scandal enough to make the Christian religion responsible for guesses; but the guessing may go on with all freedom if it but proceeds on the guesser's own responsibility. Indeed, in a few cases it will be found that to decide against the possibility of knowledge along familiar lines of inquiry will open up other lines, and the exclusion of knowledge will be the introduction

of knowledge. Naturally it will be in connection with subjects of special difficulty that this will occur; but they will also be subjects of special importance.

Finally, the aspiration for accord among Christians would seem less fanciful if doctrine ceased to be the play of speculation. Points which any one might then insist on, all could agree to. So much as is known for Christian truth would be recognized as true by all Christians, and the directest step would be taken toward a real and not narrow unity of belief. Any one can see that the church would in this way have been spared the *odium theologicum* which has made theology odious. It would have saved our docile fathers their burden and our uneasy age its scandal. For truly it is no less than a burden and a scandal to convert theology into a golfing field, and have the game turn on flying over the highest obstacle and making the longest drive.

And so if it can be shown that all authorized theologies are unwarrantably distended, there will be sober-minded and conservative Christians in plenty to agree with us. Let reason play about her schemes of doctrine as she pleases; she will never pretend to pad out the gaps in knowledge with guesses. On the contrary, if she is well advised, she will point out those gaps, and will thus be pointing out where the near-by knowledge may be found. On the other hand, unless we know what it is that we cannot know, we do not know what we can know. We may take a mistake for knowledge. It is not, then, the aim of these pages to prove that orthodox or other guesses are wrong, but only to show that they are guesses. The method of doing this will be to exhibit the singularly close relation between demonstrable ignorance and verifiable knowledge.

Noah Webster's old-time "Grammar of the English Tongue" bore as its motto an aphorism from Lord Bacon

which is not foreign to the present purpose: "Antisthenes, being asked what learning was most satisfactory, replied, 'To unlearn what is naught.'" One need not, like Antisthenes, be a cynic to say it.

3. The Riddle

If I could have my way this section would not begin with a definition. A definition is likely to ensnare the writer and repel the reader. On the topic in hand it is particularly baffling. This is because agnosticism is itself paradoxical. To define it is to offer what Samuel Johnson said a network is—something "reticulated or decussated, with interstices between the intersections." But although an attempted definition may be flimsy as a mosquito bar, and neither easy to see through nor comfortable to breathe in, it may serve to keep the enemy out.

What people mean by agnosticism is not that they do not know, but that they cannot know. If, then, we venture to utter by way of definition what is in every mind, we shall be told, as has been done again and again, last of all by Professor Flint's book on "Agnosticism," that to say what we cannot know is to show that we do know that much. And yet Doctor Flint admits that as to some matters our knowledge is necessarily partial. But a part is an entity, a whole part, an object of knowledge, or ignorance; and so the question springs up whether Doctor Flint's statement that a part is unknowable may not be disproved just as he disproves the agnostic's statement that a whole is unknowable. Could not his refutation of agnosticism in the large be used to refute his agnosticism in the little? It would seem so; and yet we would be only cajoling ourselves if we thought that, because it would be self-contradictory to say we cannot know anything about a particular matter, it would be inconsistent to say that we cannot know everything about this matter.

The explanation seems to be that while to say that we can know nothing is to show that we know something, as to partial knowledge we may point out the region of darkness without penetrating it. For instance, since the discovery of radium what had been regarded as atoms have been shown to be inconceivably divisible. If now one says that it is impossible to know just how small the ultimate particles are, and gives as a reason that we have only an approximate measure of them, does it follow that we have a precise measure, and do actually know how small those particles are? In this particular case if we explain why we don't know, are we but proving that we do know? Or if one should say that we cannot understand God's designs because they are too deep, do we show that we have fathomed the depths of God's mind, and do actually comprehend his designs? Complete agnosticism is self-contradictory, and so would partial agnosticism be if the part which we show that we know, when we say that we cannot know, coincided precisely with the part which we regard as unknowable. And yet agnosticism, or the doctrine not that we do not, but that we cannot know, is so paradoxical, and the topics it refers to so complicated, that when we reach an express statement of Christian agnosticism I am confident it will be found, what the title of this section calls it, a riddle.

But with one form of agnosticism we need no longer take any trouble. This is the doctrine that God is inherently incognizable. Skeptics and unbelievers once trooped after the Christian, spreading the banner of this agnosticism. Mansel trod on his heels crying, "I am with you." It was his way of supporting the Christian's faith! While it lasted such an agnosticism was only more tragic than comical, and all the while funny enough to weep over. But it is no longer necessary with Kant to discredit all reasoning about God except the practical;

nor, which is much the same, to discuss with Hamilton whether it is possible to know the unconditioned. The unconditioned may be, let us admit that it is, the utterly unknowable because the utterly unrelated. If we cannot come into some sort of contact with an object, we cannot cognize it. Admit thus much to Hamilton. But how, then, did he find out that there is any unconditioned? So far as we know, or can know, it is only an ideal entity. At any rate, the unconditioned is not what we mean by God. Nor need we straightway fall with Mansel into despair of a reasoned theology, because the absolute cannot create without becoming dependent on the creature for his own existence as creator. Of course no man can be a father unless he has a child. But our God is absolute only in the sense that he is self-sufficing; which is far from preventing him from being sufficient for creatures too. Nor does Mansel any longer puzzle us with his criticism that the infinite, which is the boundless, the all-inclusive, cannot create without including more than before creation; and cannot have any quality which would not limit him by excluding the opposite quality; nor can even be a self-conscious person except as he would have to be aware that he was limited by not being some other person. What if all these perplexing difficulties were real, and they are so; why, then, they are wholly inapplicable to God, because God is not the infinite; he is the All-perfect; that is, he is infinite in all excellences. He would be less than infinitely excellent if all substance, and all quality—that is, no quality—and all persons were included in him. In other words, the divine perfectness, which is the regulative idea as to God, is itself a limitation, and as such brings God within reach of the knowledge which agnosticism of this metaphysical type agrees to.

We may go further and calmly admit that, in creating,

upholding, and ruling, God has accepted notable limitations. How he could bring himself to it is another question. We may be straitened in knowledge just there. But whatever explanation is possible, or if none is possible, the fact that God has placed himself under limitations by creating and ruling a world which must be treated according to what it is, such a fact as this ends all applicability to our God of the formidable doctrine of the unknowable, which Herbert Spencer avowedly borrowed from Dean Mansel. Metaphysical agnosticism that set itself against theism may be left out of account. The agnosticism with which Christianity has to deal insists not that God is intrinsically unknowable, but that the extrinsic sources of knowledge cannot be verified.

Thomas was the first agnostic Christian. Present-day agnosticism, pure and simple, holds that the truth as to Christianity cannot be known, because Christianity cannot be subjected to the tests of physical science; and Thomas almost brutally insisted on evidence to eye and hand. "Unless I see and touch him I will not believe." And so he was the earliest agnostic among Christians, providing the place may not be claimed for Philip with his "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us." But Philip surely was too good a Jew to doubt the existence of the unseen Jehovah, and too good a Christian to mock Christ with a challenge which he secretly believed could not be met. Thomas, I think, must keep the place which he so outspokenly chose.

Yet we must not think too ill of Thomas. He found himself among men who said, "We have seen the Lord." He wanted for himself the kind of evidence which those other disciples had received, for Jesus "showed them his hands and his feet." It was a case in which illusion must not be permitted, and Thomas could satisfy himself only if, like a modern medical practitioner, he might

make his own examination by palpation and sight. John, who better than any other of them knew Jesus by heart, knew what the evidence of the senses was worth, and was bent on passing over its certificate to those who could no longer reach Jesus for themselves. "That which we have heard," said he, "which we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have handled . . . declare we unto you." For one I am glad there was a Thomas to demand tangible proof, and that no other apostle lacked it.

Still, neither Thomas nor John, nor any of us by their aid, reaches through the senses the reality in religion. At most the senses open the path to that reality. Not the resurrection of Jesus, nor any of his miracles, as so much matter of fact, is the stuff of which Christianity is all compact. Miracles might be but objects of curiosity, as they were to Herod. They could be less than this. Curiosity is an appetite of the mind, and miracles like that of the loaves and fishes might serve the next day only to sharpen bodily hunger. Even at their best, miracles might be so far from the essence of Christianity as to antagonize it. The great miracle of raising Lazarus operated thus on the minds of Pharisees. It is not difficult to understand how it might be so. Pharisees saw in the miracles of Jesus proofs that he was a sorcerer, had dealings with Beelzebub. The greater then the miracle, the more diabolical. The substance of Christianity is *Christ as related to man*. Whether the senses find a way for us to Christ, for Christ to us, to Thomas, to John, or close the way on us as on the stubborn Pharisees, all turns on whether we are disposed toward Christ as John and Thomas, or as the Pharisees were. In no case could the senses do more than espy the opening of a way. And so Thomas, although for the time an agnostic Christian, was not a Christian agnostic. With a loving and dutiful spirit, his agnosticism was no less that of an enemy.

Of agnosticism in this sense Professor Huxley proposed a well-known definition: "Agnosticism, in fact, is not a creed, but a method, the essence of which lies in the rigorous application of a single principle. . . Positively the principle may be expressed: In matters of the intellect follow your reason as far as it will take you, without regard to any other consideration. And negatively: In matters of the intellect do not pretend that conclusions are certain which are not demonstrated or demonstrable. That I take to be the agnostic faith, which if a man keep whole and undefiled, he shall not be ashamed to look the universe in the face, whatever the future may have in store for him." But Huxley's almost preternatural cleverness in putting his own case has this time been overstrained. Here is no definition of the doctrine that we cannot know, but only a statement of the conditions on which we may claim to know. It is the ordinary attitude of every investigator, whatever his religious beliefs or doubts. That the inventor of the definition possibly surmised this may be conjectured from his statement that "the scientific theologian admits the agnostic principle, however widely his results may differ from those reached by the majority of agnostics." [1] But Professor Huxley was an agnostic as to Christianity, and largely as to theism. He would not admit knowledge of spiritual things, because all knowledge is "matter of the intellect"; and to him, as Romanes puts it, the word agnosticism, which Professor Huxley coined, was meant to signify "an attitude of reasoned ignorance touching everything that lies beyond the sphere of sense-perception—a professed inability to found valid belief on any other basis." [2]

Precisely here Christian agnosticism differs from

[1] "Science and Christian Tradition," pp. 245, 246, 313.

[2] "Thoughts on Religion," p. 113.

agnosticism, pure and simple. Christian agnosticism holds that the spiritual is real and knowable. We know a great deal which cannot pass the tests of physical science. This range of the knowable is not immediately "matter of the intellect"; and yet the intellect knows that otherwise than by intellection we are acquainted with it all. The spiritual, not being the physical, is not sensed, but is recognized by some appropriate faculty, and intellect knows that it is so apprehended. Indeed, it is our peculiar function as rational beings to know the reality of spiritual things. Some at least of them are important beyond all other objects of knowledge. Some of them we know so surely that the opposite of them cannot even be thought. To begin with a humble specimen, we know the ludicrous; but physical science cannot by any possibility know that anything is funny. Science can know the absurd, for the absurd is the unfit. Among physical objects it is a lack of correspondence between means and ends. But that the absurd is laughable, science could never find out. It does not know what is meant by the laughable, except that it produces laughter; but the amusement which reveals itself in laughter science knows nothing about. Science cannot be humorous. When a skater's feet fly up and his hands clutch at the air, such a posture is plainly absurd; for skates cannot skim along an air-plane, and hands find nothing in air to hold on by. But if those who witness so absurd a spectacle are heartless enough to laugh, science could not justify them by showing that there was something to laugh at. The beautiful is as alien from science as the comical. Science may yet make out the relation of sounds pleasant in succession, as it now knows the relations of pleasing and simultaneous sounds. The structure of melody may some day, if not already, be as capable of mathematical expression, *teste* Helmholz, as were long since

the highly mathematical laws of harmony. If so, science would know it all. The master of acoustics would know what music is pleasing, and why; but if he were without an "ear for music," he would remain as ignorant of any agreeableness beyond that of an algebraic demonstration as though he were stone deaf. The charms of color and form are altogether beyond expression through the fullest expression of their laws; but he who on this account denied the existence of the beautiful and the sublime would be bereft of reason. Rational beings also intimately know the lovable. Physical beauty may awaken love, but love is often independent of physical charms. The most lovable of all men was one about whose appearance we know absolutely nothing. The disciples of Jesus were not at pains to tell us by so much as one word whether their Master was tall or short, lean or stout, fair or dark, with black eyes or blue, whether his features were Jewish or Gentilic, his hair demurely straight or graciously curled, his voice pitched high or low, its tones resonant or soft, his bearing stately or meek; yet they have left us with an assurance of his unapproachable loveliness. But science knows nothing about it, could not know aught of Jesus, except what it has not been worth while to tell us. Science all along would empty the world of love. But we love, and we know that the lovable is real. If now the physical philosopher, who will not let himself be cajoled by sentiments like these, puts away also moral distinctions as superstitious, there is no way of convincing him along his own lines. His science can know the normal, which is the only moral, and the abnormal, which is the only immoral; but it cannot know the moral goodness of the normal, nor the moral badness of the abnormal. And yet if any incapacity of science deprived a man of his ability to perceive that there is a difference between right and wrong, it

would only be by despoiling him of rationality. The amusing, the beautiful and sublime, the lovable, the moral are all spiritual, all real, all knowable; God is the synthesis of ideal beauty and sublimity, of the ideal lovely and holy; and there may be some way of knowing him. A Christian agnosticism insists that he is known.

But Christian agnosticism would not be agnostic unless it also insisted that spiritual things can be but partially known. The voice of agnosticism, pure and simple, is the voice of Thomas, "Unless I see I will not believe"; the voice of Christian agnosticism is the voice of Paul, "Now I know in part." We know spiritual things with certainty, but we know them imperfectly.

On closer study of spiritual things we shall find this startling paradox, *what we know best we know least.* This is the riddle which Christian agnosticism gives us to solve. The converse also is true, that much as to which we know least we know the most. If one is timid, and doubts whether he knows spiritual things at all, he may be reassured by the fact that the very objects of his deepest ignorance are objects of secure and indubitable knowledge; but for many Christians who like to state Christian doctrines the direct lesson of Christian agnosticism is needed: what they feel surest of, and have a right to feel surest of because they have immediate knowledge of it, this is in part walled off. They may see in, but not through. Often the remoter objects about which we may claim to know something seem not so essentially inscrutable. The telescope of revelation may make distinct that which is indistinguishable to the natural eye.

II

SELF

II

SELF

1. The Soul

WHAT every one knows best of all is that he himself exists. In some moment of blurred vision he might fail to see clearly that anything else exists, but against that hazy background he would still clearly enough discern—himself. In the weird sport of philosophy he might even play that he was not, but actually to doubt that he was would be to doubt that he doubted. Doubt would thus undo itself, and the game would have to begin all over again. Every one knows himself best, but he knows little about what he thus knows best. I do not refer to the fact that circumstances might reveal qualities which he had not suspected in himself; I refer to something far more radical: you do not know where you are, nor what you are.

You say "I am here, in my body"; but whereabouts in it? Then you look at your foot; the sole of it seems as far from you as the floor it rests on. You are locating yourself in your eyes, or just behind them. But if some one steps on your foot, there is where you are. Were you at first close to your eyes, and did you have the misfortune to move down into your foot just in time to be stepped on? Or is one part of you in one member all the time and another part all the time in another member? No, for what you know about yourself, if you are conscious of anything, is that you are as compact and indivisible an unit as though the self were a mathematical point. Self-knowledge actually goes far enough to make of your location the same mystery which theology finds in the divine omnipresence; the whole of God is

everywhere. I do not see that, so far, our self-knowledge is any more intelligible than the mystic's definition that God is a circle whose center is everywhere, and whose circumference is nowhere. Let us say, then, that you are all in one part all the while for one purpose and in another part for another purpose, but for the vital processes only incessantly and everywhere engaged at one thing at once. But the case has become no clearer through distinguishing functions. Well as you know yourself, you do not know where you are, for to be in more than one place at a time is beyond comprehension.

And you do not in the least know what you are. Plainly you do not mistake your body for yourself. Your body is yours, not you. Your word for what you take yourself to be is *soul* or *spirit*. At first you might mistake your body for yourself. Probably you did. It is certain that you did. What can a young child, even when it becomes conscious of self, know of soul as distinct from body? Experience early taught you that you have a body, for things were going on which could go on only in a body of yours; and experience now teaches you that you not merely have, but are a soul, for things are happening in you which happen only to a soul. Your body does what body alone can do, and your soul is doing what soul alone can do. You have as much reason for recognizing that you are, not have, a soul as for recognizing that you have, and are not, a body. If you say "I *believe* so," your belief is but the confidence of your knowledge. You *feel* assured of a fact that you *know*.

But what do you mean if you say that you know yourself as soul? This means spirit dwelling in a body. What then does spirit mean? It means something in essence immaterial. But this is to describe it only by negation; what positive account can you give of spirit? You can tell what it does, but not what it is. It thinks, it

feels, it wills; but any words which describe its nature are, like the word *spirit* itself, mere figures of speech. Strictly they refer to some physical quality—which is not what you intend. We are in the predicament of invincible ignorance trying to teach. When we say *spirit,* or describe what spirit is, we do not mean what we say, nor say what we mean. That is, when we try to make out and to state that which we essentially are, we do it by comparing what spirit is with what body is. And then we are utterly baffled and routed. There is not in either body or soul one quality which does not have to be denied of the other. If anything is common to both, what is it except that both *are?* It cannot always be said that both live. Spirit lives; what we mean by spirit cannot be thought of as lifeless. It is the principle of life, and the life-principle without life would be non-existent. "If the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" Both spirit and body exist; we can say no more for them both. We cannot say that both act; for to act does not signify the same process in both cases. When body acts it shifts its position; does the soul change place when it acts? Does mind move through space when it thinks—say a hundred miles, or the hundredth of an inch? Some thinking you call deep; how deep? Could you find out with plummet and line? You like a friend with some warmth of feeling; if you plunged a thermometer into his soul would the quicksilver go up? Your will perhaps is strong; how much can it bend before it breaks? A steel wire can be pulled in a machine until it snaps, and the machine indicates the strain which it bore; can the human will show just so many pounds of resistance to a tensile strain? As to what a man essentially is—what he is in his very self—could he know less? That he is spirit or soul could he from the nature of the case be better assured?

2. The Body

Our relation to the body is just as well and just as little known. Our knowledge of the physical is grounded in the spiritual. Nothing made out by psycho-physics is to the contrary. I know spirit as effective or affected. I can move my hand; that is, my spirit can cause a bodily organ to move. I do it, but how I do it I know no better now than when I was an unthinking babe. Nor is there a prospect that I can ever know any more. Your hand touches mine, and I, because I am spirit, perceive the touch; but how impact on my body produces an act of the mind no one in the least understands, nor, it would seem, is going to, so intimate are absolute knowledge and absolute ignorance of the soul's relation to the body. It is not to be doubted that I found out my own existence in finding that I could move my body, or my body move me; but all the same that primary knowledge is permanent ignorance. When all the things are reckoned up which I can do with my body, or which my body can do with me, I cannot see how a single one is done.

Furthermore, I am as much in the dark about voluntary motions as about the involuntary motions of heart and lungs, stomach and liver. Sometimes we call automatic nerve action a great mystery, while voluntary acts can be seen through; we insist that instinct explains nothing, but demands explanation, while conscious intelligence and purpose explain all that is going on. Very true of purposes and thoughts as operations of the mind. After all that has been made out or well guessed about how instinct is formed we have no glimmering of an idea how this organized, almost physical imitation of intelligence and purpose works, whereas we are aware just how we think and plan; yet all the more startling is the depth of our incapacity to find how planning or thinking has any relation, active or passive, to the body.

One may take the risk of declaring that we know the world about us solely because spirit dominates matter. At least it is true that nature's laws are intelligible, and that apart from them there would be nothing to know. There would be only chaos. Laws are the fixed order in things. If this order were lacking, things would have no continuity, no quality, nothing could be known about them except that there was nothing to know. Every lawless thing would be a no-thing. Nothing could be said of it, because there would be nothing in it. But law prevails, the world is intelligible, this intelligibility is best understood on the theory that mind dominates nature; and still it will remain utterly beyond imagination how the Supreme Mind impressed law upon things. It would be to see him giving them qualities, and this in turn would be to see him creating them. Our ignorance of the Supreme Mind's relation to dependent worlds is much of a sort with ignorance of our own mind's relation to our servant body. In both cases we can know forethought, afterthought, intention, and that these are potent; but that is all.

In addition to these commonplace and wholly normal illustrations of what mind can do to body a good deal of attention has been given in these days to the depressing or enlivening influence of mental on bodily health. A century ago mesmerism and so-called animal magnetism, more than a half-century ago spiritualism and alleged clairvoyancy, following these to our time faith-cures, mind-cures, Christian Science, metaphysical healing, have all showed in glaring light the power of mind over body. Not a few intelligent persons have been surprised into accepting some of these phenomena as supernatural. They have simulated miracles, and have turned nearly all the "movements" which they were associated with into a sort of religion. Yet back of the most

whimsical results has always been discoverable the capacity of men to befool themselves—for superstition is often the faith of skeptics, and also the undeniable power, often abnormal, always inexplicable, of mind over body, it might perhaps be said of spirit over matter. Not more important than what has thus far been cited concerning the relation of mind to body, but even more mysterious, is the converse fact, the control of body over mind.

Here morbid phenomena first secured notice. The most familiar is the mental excitement produced by physical stimulants, and the mental depression occasioned by bodily disease. These effects pass freely into the moral sphere. Outrageous crimes are committed under the spur of excessive doses of alcohol, hasheesh, and the like. By such excesses the judgment is utterly bewildered and the moral sense annulled. Ordinary disease may bring to view one's evil possibilities. Samuel Johnson, who certainly had experience enough of himself as well as clear enough insight into others, used to say that disease makes a man intolerably selfish, exacting every attention and sparing no one. We can recognize enough of truth in this cynical observation to give all credit to those sick folk who illustrate the shining virtues of fortitude, patience, and consideration for their attendants. The most repulsive exhibition of morbid effects of body upon mind is seen in the occasional frenzy of epilepsy, in the shameless imbecility of the idiot, or the more than bestial fury of the insane.

Rarer effects than these occasionally drew the attention of the old psychology. An ignorant girl, who many years before had heard her scholarly master read aloud in Hebrew, during a severe illness repeated the words which had impressed themselves upon her memory. Intelligence had no share in this marvel, but the brain itself had received an impression and, like a phonograph, could

reverse the process. More recent cases have been recorded of an accident or illness producing entire forgetfulness of one's previous life, name, and friends. Complete recovery of physical health has in a few of these cases been accompanied by the assumption of a new name, new family ties, and new business. But all this in turn has abruptly given way to entire oblivion of the immediate past, and to perfect recollection of what had belonged to and occupied a lifetime up to the date of the accident or disease.

Experiments in hypnotism by the best equipped and most careful investigators have seemed to reveal something like dual, or even multiple personality. While in the hypnotic state the subject of experiment would for the time-being show precisely the lapse of memory and the organization of a new consciousness, which have just now been mentioned in connection with disease. Some would ascribe this to the strictly mental process of suggestion; but no such suggestion is made by the experimenter. The rise of a new consciousness, the seeming emergence of a new soul, has been entirely spontaneous and automatic. So far as any inference is admissible, it is that here is indicated the thoroughly inexplicable power of body over mind. Ribot goes so far as to say that the organism is the personality.[1]

Of still more recent date is the elaboration of a theory of subliminal consciousness, which goes to prove that not merely in exceptionally rare and artificial states, but continually and normally the mind has the capacity of carrying to a conclusion and being controlled by unconscious processes of the utmost importance. These are so like the automatic activities of the nerves which control respiration, circulation, digestion, and reconstruction of tissues that the subconscious activities of the soul seem

[1] See the "Diseases of Personality."

to exhibit in novel manner unconscious processes of the bodily organism.

A conservative writer on this general theme states that it is unsafe, in the interests of morality, to let the imagination dwell on pictures of evil; and not for the familiar reason that such images defile the mind, but because they impress the brain itself. By a physiological law if one imagines himself as engaged in a line of vicious conduct, the brain is stamped by the imagination as by an experience. So deep and so permanent is the impression that if one unexpectedly finds himself at any point in that fancied series of evil deeds, the rest of them are like a channel already cut for a stream. Happily all of us know how nearly insurmountable an obstacle stands in the way of a sin never before committed. But a single indulgence throws down that obstacle, while a succession of indulgences forms a habit, and the momentum of habit is accorded to a lifetime of sinning. Now imagination is in idea the committal of wrong, and by that committal, either in fact or in idea, the body has already measurably consigned the soul to the service of the wrong. Here is primarily an effect of mind on brain, secondarily of brain on mind.

But how complete a blank is our knowledge of the process. Brain and mind are not like two wheels connected by a belt. We see them running accurately together without any visible connection. No belt is even imaginable. The territories of brain and mind are separated by a bottomless abyss. No bridge is in sight between them. No transit can be traced from one side to the other. Yet the gulf is somehow overleaped continually. We can see that it is done, but we cannot see it done. Nor is a secret tunnel to be believed in, for the chasm between mind and body is unfathomable. No interconversion of molecular movements and thoughts is

conceivable. They are concomitant, but concomitance is not convertibility. And there is no prospect that the paradox will ever be resolved for us. In the physical sphere causation is continuity. The cause reappears in the effect; the effect is the cause modified. But although causal relations are incessant between body and soul, there is a complete breach of continuity. This point must come up again in these pages, and for fuller notice. It is the mystery of other mysteries. Agnosticism *here* certifies and explains agnosticism *there*.

The most singular and inexplicable of all relations between soul and body is that between the cellular structure of the body and the spirit's unity of consciousness. The body is an aggregate of cells. It is a populous colony, not a single house with a single inhabitant. Our attention has of late years been summoned by physiologists to the fact that each of these innumerable cells has its own individual life, and performs spontaneously its individual function. A coral reef alive with coral insects would thus seem to be the analogue of a human body. How, then, does consciousness come to be witness not only to the organic unity of the body, but to the absolute unity of the soul? Each cell has its own soul; that is, its own principle of life, if any such principle exists; how is it possible to conceive the human soul to be an aggregate of those countless cellular souls? Is the soul we are conscious of the inhabitant of one cell? If so, of which one? We have already seen that it cannot be localized at any point in the body. One might suggest that the human soul is the soul of that primal cell of which alone the body once consisted, and that the division and increase of cells was by force of the energy which exists in that original cell. But at once we are met by the objection that the first cell is to all intents the parent of the earliest of those successive cells, which serve in

turn by their fission as real parents to the next which are formed; so that the embryonic growth of the body is like a series of unnumbered generations, over which the first cell stands in no relation, or semblance of relation, of patriarchal control. Indeed, the original cell no longer has distinct existence. It is lost through subdivision. No other cell holds the hegemony in this densely populated state. Nor does a democracy exist, nor a commune. Each individual cell acts its own part, so serves all the rest, and is served by all; but although the organic unity of the body corresponds to the unity with which the human soul was credited before the souls of cells were dreamed of, still the soul of all these souls, if that is what it is, is wholly unconscious of its subordinate souls, or of any multiplicity in itself. Agnosticism is dark as a starless night.

3. The Will

On no other subject, I think, is a sound agnosticism so distinctly informing as on the vexed subject of the will and its freedom. Here confessed inability to know is found to be new knowledge. The riddle of agnosticism becomes a solution for the riddle of the will.

On this matter consciousness has an endless quarrel with experience. Consciousness assures us that we are free to choose without regard to our characters; but when we have attempted to do so, experience shows that our characters have once more determined our choices, we never succeed in choosing according to what we are not. Experience will have it that every act, momentous or trivial, obviously consistent or, as we sometimes call it, inconsistent, more or less reveals and also fixes and intensifies a man's peculiar qualities; but consciousness can by no means be cajoled into relaxing her insistence that we are every one as persons quite free, above all

things else, to decide for or against any extraneous inducement or ingrained preference.

This dispute involves, as is well known, two often rival disciplines—the scientific and the philosophical. Physical science, calmly holding that the innermost and utmost we can know of anything is its laws, or order of characteristic phenomena, will no more admit that men can escape that order than they can escape out of the nature which that order reveals. And this would be no less a self-contradiction than for iron to become granite, unless iron is already granite under another form, or for alkali to turn acid, unless acid and alkali are essentially the same. The view thus taken by physical science has won a striking advantage through the application by laboratory methods of physiology to psychology. So closely related does this new method show mind and body to be that it insists always on a physical equivalent for thought, and tends toward interpreting this equivalence as a convertibility. Waiving the question of its success in this last attempt, physiological psychology has made it highly probable, if not altogether certain, that the physical conditions are prepared in advance for every mental act, and are so certainly its conditions that any other mental act than the one thus prepared for would be as impossible as would be a physical occurrence differing from that for which the physical conditions were in readiness. Thus mind is bound in unbending necessity. Appalling as this conclusion seems, let it be borne in mind that it could not be grimmer than the necessitarianism, or if one prefers, the determinism, which Jonathan Edwards taught; only he found the inflexible conditions of a volition in the mind itself. But mental philosophy, which builds on consciousness in expounding the operations of the mind, persists as earnestly as ever that if we throw out the testimony of consciousness, we reject the

basis of science too; while ethics leaps to the side of this veteran psychology with alarmed but determined front, staking all on the self-evidence of her proposition that unless choice is free, it is without moral quality, good or bad.

Argyle, in an appendix to his once famous "Reign of Law," took the ground that some progress ought by this time to be made toward a settlement of the hitherto interminable conflict between libertarianism and determinism. If it were the kindred problem of the relation of God's will to man's, the inscrutability of the divine mind would make it easy to acquiesce in leaving the problem unsolved; but when the question concerns ourselves only, and one of the most familiar of our mental acts at that, who can regard without impatience the perpetuation of just the same issue with just the same attempts to solve it? Has not modern study any help to offer? It has thrown unlooked-for light on many an outstanding problem; can it not afford at least a momentary flashlight, a brief, glimmering hint toward the right course through the thick darkness and over these tumbled waters? Does not physiological psychology itself, quite as much in finding its limits and experiencing its disappointments as in making its discoveries and proving its points, supply new aid? In other words, cannot a proved agnosticism help where an ever-contested gnosis has failed? At least it falls to us to test this possibility. I do not see how we can be excused from making the attempt; although too often the efforts of each rival theory to win over the other have been like those of the witless fellow in Bedlam hospital, mentioned by Ribot, who imagined that he was lost, and used to look for himself under the bed.

If we can make out the precise ground on which each party rests its contention, we may be able to find an outlook toward reconciliation. What, then, are the facts,

if any, on which determinism is planted? It alleges no more than this, that every self-determination of a man, every choice and every volition to execute a choice, is invariably characteristic of the man. This position is not affected by the triviality or the importance of the matter decided, nor even by its correspondence to what the man himself and every one else would say was like him. That is, he may form a single determination which represents the average of all his determinations, and it may thus serve as a precise measure of the whole current of his life; or this single decision may be as eccentric, as startlingly diverse from all his choices heretofore as may ever be observed among the doings of a freakish person. If it is the decision of a trifling matter, whether I will make a gesture in uttering these words, or whether it shall be this particular gesture rather than some other, whatever I do will be just like me, will so far show me up, and the most perfect acquaintance which any one has with me will be largely what he has found out by the aggregate of acts singly unimportant and, as every one would say, insignificant. Or if my decision is the most momentous which I ever reach, it will but show that I am capable of so much good or evil, of good, let us say, by God's grace, of evil perhaps by instigation of the devil. If the decision is so good that I was never before capable of it, this is why I had need that the Spirit of God should radically change me; and after he has changed me this act becomes as like the new me as all that preceded it was like the former me. Did any man since the fall, assuming that there was a fall, did any man in the whole course of human history since "man's first disobedience" ever decide on much or little which was not correspondent to what he was at the moment of decision, and so far both a revelation and a development of character?

Determinists therefore hold that choice corresponds to character, because this is the invariable experience in choosing. It may be added that nothing else is imaginable. Imagine, if you can, that you choose what it is not in any way like you to choose; is it not at once evident that it is like you so to surprise others and yourself? Must not every acquaintance of yours see that this unprecedented act is itself all the more important exposition of what you are? To do just what it is unlike you to do would be to show that you are what you are not. On all suppositions this is unimaginable. Experience, then, is the basis of determination.

On what grounds does libertarianism insist that one may choose either of opposites? The gravest reason is that without freedom of choice there could be no responsibility, nor morality. Not contesting this point, we may ask whether freedom must include freedom to choose incompatibly with what one is. Is the freedom required for moral quality in conduct anything more than freedom to form a preference? Why need this preference by possibility be one which would not correspond to what a man is? Is not a volition morally the more significant the more it represents the moral qualities of the man? Can it be that I am neither moral nor immoral unless capable of doing what no man ever yet did, to wit, acting not like myself, but like some other man? When character becomes settled, when it becomes all of one sort, if it ever does, is it at once without moral quality? Is character no longer character when it is fixed? Assuming that Satan is so bad that he cannot do right, must we say that he has no badness at all? Assuming that we Christian folk measurably attain in this life, and completely in the next life, a condition in which the ability to sin, the *posse peccare,* becomes inability to sin, the *non posse peccare,* is our goodness no longer goodness

when it has become unalterable? Dare any one say that because it is impossible for God to do wrong, this infinite perfection is incapacity to do right? If he is immutable, does that make him non-moral? Does, then, libertarianism appeal to *a fact* when it claims that without power of contrary choice there is no choice, no morality?

But it also claims that consciousness testifies to power of contrary choice. The claim is fundamental; but is it a valid claim? There are two objections. The first is that consciousness does not quite certainly in all cases testify precisely to the alleged effect. Perhaps one is not always conscious of "power to the contrary." I may with some hesitation say that the victim of one of those sins, like drunkenness, which become a habit of the body, may feel powerless against the impetus of a temptation which he never effectually resists. If I hesitate to say that a miserable drunkard is sometimes aware that he has lost ability to abstain from his especial sin—and the question is not whether he has such ability, but only whether he feels that he has it—Paul did not hesitate to confess that this was his own condition as to sin in general. The well-remembered passage in the seventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans speaks of him as "sold under sin," as "in captivity to the law of sin," and describes both the horror and the helplessness of his condition by calling it "this death." To be sure it may be replied that this is but a relation of his experience, and no one will deny that experience reveals in the long run correspondence between what one is and what one does. And yet when Paul said "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me," he seems to be uttering not merely the lesson of past experience, but his consciousness at the moment of choice. To express his consciousness of helplessness did he not break clear of all psychological verity and declare that it is not himself;

it is sin which dwells in him, that so opposes him until he is incapable of good? It will not do to fall back here on a distinction between *wahlfrei* and *machtfrei*, between freedom to choose and freedom to do. The question is precisely one of power, and of power in the will. The will is the executive faculty, the faculty which acts. The moral nature has not two executive faculties, one the will, which is free; the other "power," which is in bondage. We have not, I dare to say, two executive faculties, one of which does right, the other of which does wrong, one of which, our will, "delights in the law of God," while the other, not our will, "brings us into captivity to the law of sin." Paul seems to give such support as his untechnical account of himself may, to the doubt whether we are always conscious of "the power of contrary choice."

But waiving the attempt to define the consciousness of human beings enfeebled by sin, let us ask as to human beings who attain to holiness; that is, whose whole energy is given to being right and doing right. Is it not conceivable that these may have no consciousness of ability to make a wicked choice? This is not a repetition of the point made a moment ago from the nature of the case, that inability to do wrong would not exclude ability to do right. Just now the appeal is to consciousness alone. And we do not need to imagine a moral perfection which few pretend to reach. Put the question to a commonplace Christian: Do you not sometimes honor your Lord enough to feel in no degree tempted to "call Jesus accursed"? Are there not at least a few moments in your life when the idea of blaspheming the name of the Son of Man would only affect you with horror? Let us make the question as crucial as possible. Let the only inducement to this profane indignity be the light-minded challenge of a person too frivolous for you to consider;

would you not in such a case be able to say, "I cannot do this sin?" Or instead of a Christian and Christ, let it be two good friends, if one prefers, "a lover and his lass." Are there no moments of friendship whole-hearted, of affection pure and strong, when an entirely sane person would know that he could not bring himself to do some abominable evil to his dear friend, to his sweet love? Must the libertarian still feel bound to insist that while that lover or friend is conscious of a moral impossibility, he is conscious of some other kind of possibility? Does the mightiest love always say to itself in presence of the weakest temptation, "I am *capable* of doing this foul and hateful wrong"?

I do avow my own conviction that love is not always conscious that it could at any moment by sheer volition turn to hate. I do not think our consciousness is clearly to the effect that if God must love, if he himself is love, he then altogether ceases to love. To me it seems that liberty to will *in my own way* is the fullest liberty, that ability to will *only* in my own way is the strictest necessity, and that consciousness testifies to both facts. My way is mine with all my heart, but I cannot get away from it. I do not know how to, and do not feel that I can. My way will still be my way, however unlike myself I may at first feel. Necessity and freedom thus are one, whether we look into the nature of the case, so far as it can be penetrated, or listen to the testimony of consciousness, so far as it can be understood. The first objection, then, to the libertarian's appeal to consciousness is that consciousness does not always affirm power of contrary choice.

When it does so affirm, we may be making a common enough mistake; we may be mistaking volition for choice, and ascribing to choice a "power to the contrary" which belongs only to volition. Choice is net preference, and

preference is inevitably characteristic; but volition is decision to execute choice, and volition does not require that choice be of a given sort; it asks only that there be choice. We know we can make up our minds to do as we choose, to the uttermost bounds of possible contradiction in choices. Power of contrary volition exists, whether power of contrary choice exists or not. If one of these is not mistaken for the other, then agnosticism may help us. It does not challenge the testimony of consciousness nor disparage the consciousness of freedom, but it interprets that consciousness, and so interprets as to resolve the contradiction. Let us see:

Knowing God to be holy, I know absolutely that he will always do right. I know that he cannot choose to do wrong. But he, knowing my mixed character completely, knows precisely what I will do. If his knowledge was incomplete, he could not so foreknow. Martineau, for the sake of vindicating human freedom, denies divine foreknowledge of human conduct. He admits that God foreknows only all possibilities. To such a contention we need only reply that *if* God knew men well enough, he would foreknow their choices, because their choices uniformly correspond to what they are. It is a bold but a consistent doctrine of the will's freedom which goes to the length of denying the completeness of God's knowledge. Those, on the other hand, who hold to the perfect foreknowledge of God should feel sure that he foresees precisely what inducements to choice will arise for any man, and what inducements will prevail. Determinism is for God a correct doctrine of the will.

Now we know many a man well enough to know that pilfering a till, committing a highway robbery, or proving a traitor to a sacred trust would be to him morally impossible, at least in existing circumstances. It cannot be conceded that our estimate of our acquaintances is in all

these cases at fault, and that they are liable to commit, just as things stand, the offenses now most disgusting to them and most foreign to what is known of their character. They cannot seem free to do these foul evils. Their freedom is no more than the irresistible, yet voluntary preference for doing right.

But we do not entirely understand any one of these friends of ours. Imaginable courses of conduct, let us say in unimportant, or let us say in highly important matters, are so far from any course we have known them to be engaged in that we can have no idea which among all these novel lines of action they would select. We have not carried our acquaintance far enough to guess what it would be at all like one of our friends to do in any such case. So far as you and I can see he is quite free to fix upon any possible one of these courses. It does not follow that he is so out of relation to all the lines of conduct which will be open to him as to prevent one of them from being more suitable to him than another. What he will do, if we but knew it, is just as certain in advance under these unwonted circumstances as in a matter about which his character has been well tried and amply exhibited. But our conception of his freedom is in no degree incompatible with this unrevealed certainty of preference. So far as our knowledge goes he is free. That is to say, our inability thoroughly to understand the man adequately accounts for our notion that he is free, a notion which may rule our own precautions, if the matter affects you and me also. To us he cannot but seem at liberty to decide in any practicable way, while in point of fact he is not able to decide incompatibly with the sort of person that, without our knowledge, he really is.

How would the case be altered if I were myself the person to whom it fell to decide about matters of a kind that I had never anything to do with, and as to which

I had never discovered in myself any predilection? Would I not certainly regard the whole case as open for my choice? Would not one course seem just as free to me as another? So long as no course of them all fitted what I knew myself to be, how could I have any other consciousness than of freedom unhampered by anything in myself? Or, leaving out of account those novel overtures of fortune, which when they come have for my taste agreeableness or disagreeableness, do I in familiar affairs, small or great, possess so complete self-knowledge as to foresee what decision will be exactly like me? Can I, looking ahead, see in the distance the rapids and the quiet stretches, know how fast the current of life will run, or where the eddies will form? Does any one foreknow what he will to-day decide to do in any of the exigencies which daily call on him for a decision unless as to such matters he has found himself out? As to all future occasions in which he cannot be sure what his mind will be, is it not clear that consciousness can affirm no less than a liberty wide as the uncertainty? Is there not correspondence as strict, as easy to understand, between ignorance of one's self and sense of freedom in advance, as there is between one's new knowledge of one's self when the mind has been made up and character once more illustrated in retrospect? Agnosticism is truth about man's acquaintance with man, himself or another man; not less certain is the sense of freedom in the whole range of the possible but unknowable in men. I dare say that even a machine, if it were conscious and had not yet learned which would be "the line of least resistance," would feel free to move in any direction. In a so endlessly debated matter there is at least a probability that agnosticism is utmost knowledge. If so, then necessity is freedom, and freedom is necessity, seen in reverse. The testimony of consciousness and that

of experience can be reconciled. If a man knew himself as God knows him, his choices would *seem* to be as certain as they really are; but while they seem to be *uncertain,* they must equally seem to be *free.*

Now a theory is correct if it explains all the facts. What fact in experience, what datum in consciousness does agnosticism fall short of satisfying, however contradictory these otherwise may be? I may add that their extreme contradictoriness is itself a fact which agnosticism alone can presumably account for. And if agnosticism resolves the paradox of the will, where gnosis has steadily failed, it is once more proved that we may be knowing the utmost when we know how little can be known.

Now character, of which we have had so much to say, is the stamp left by conduct on what we are by birth. It is a growth directed by exercise. Practically it is nature plus habit. At once the question arises, If we cancel our habit, how much of what we are is ours by inheritance?

4. The Inheritance

What do we inherit? If a persistent irreconcilability of answers may raise the presumption that a final answer is not to be hoped for, the question before us is of that sort. Agnosticism may not in this case afford the problem's solution, but it affords insight when it shows that the problem is in whole or part insoluble. Such is ever the relation of sound agnosticism to real knowledge.

It seems to make little difference where we seek information about man's inheritance. Centuries were busied, sometimes intensely busied, in attempts to construe the Bible's doctrine. The responses of theology in the name of Scripture have ranged all the way from a light-hearted assurance that we receive no moral stamp

from our forebears to the stern dogma that we inherit a curse which God laid on the first man's first sin. According to one extreme we are born neither good nor bad; we are like our first parent—colorless in morals. According to the other extreme sheer imputation to us of Adam's offense, an offense in which as severally created souls we have no share, makes us guilty in God's sight, and punishment is inflicted on us in the form of native depravity. Between these extremes lie all imaginable theories of imputation, of inheritance, of vitiosity, and of guilt. If with one party our souls are tainted because the primal sin is reckoned against us, according to another party that sin is so reckoned because our souls are tainted by it. Some will have it that a taint is inherited through the derivation of our souls from our parents; others insist that although the taint is inherited, our souls are not derived. For a few the body corrupts the soul, for more the soul corrupts the body, for others both are alike corrupt. It may not be conceded that this corruption amounts to worse than "pravity," and then it is insisted that it is nothing less than depravity out and out. Those who agree to call our inheritance depravity do not agree to call it sinful. Some of them say it is sinful because it leads to sin, but deny that depravity should itself be considered sin, because "sin consists in sinning." One litigant discovers among the productive assets of our native estate faults for which we incur no blame; but an opposite result is claimed from the inventory, to wit, that all the faults and outbreaks of a lifetime are condemnable because they spring from a nature which is condemned. In other words, according to one party responsibility attaches only to voluntary choices of the will, while the other party grimly insists that in the last analysis, and as the last word, responsibility resolves into sheer inevitableness of consequences from character and conduct.

If widespread dislike for these contending notions could dispose of them all, the old issue as to man's moral inheritance would be summarily put out of court. The assurance often heard would be thrice welcome to multitudes, namely, that inheritance of depravity or blameworthiness in any sense or degree is henceforth to be neglected as a discredited dogma, a revolting superstition. But it may be doubted whether a dogma is altogether refuted by even so widespread and so hearty distaste for it. May we disbelieve in religion all that we dislike? Theologians have always appealed to human experience, and is it quite clear that their interpretation of man's experience is a complete mistake? Can sinfulness, alone of all universal traits in man, be set down as the product of an uninherited and individual lapse of human beings, all and singly, from inborn innocence?

But any blame which we insist on attaching to ingrained evil propensity will surely return to plague us. For instance, every one now tenaciously believes in the salvation of infants. Stern Calvinists are particularly fond of the doctrine, yet without denying that the infant nature is corrupt and blameworthy. Undoubtedly such a view of their nature embarrasses the view that they are safe. Indeed, the assurance of their safety in view of their depravity is mostly extra-scriptural. Yet not a few would rather doubt the book than doubt the doctrine. Again, if Jesus was liable to temptation because he was the son of a not immaculate Mary, was born in "the likeness of sinful flesh," how did he escape the inheritance of depravity? If other men inherit it, why not in the least he? Or if we yield to the accumulating evidence, to the spreading conviction, and make man himself a product of evolution, either with or without divine intervention, must we not with equal candor set down his moral attributes to bestial inheritance? But

if we do so, what becomes of the traditional, not to say scriptural, doctrine of man's original innocence? We are not at liberty to adopt and cherish doctrines for which we have a relish, while rejecting disrelished doctrines which go with them. The verities as to God are not less sacred than the verities as to things. Theology is bound to be as faithful to facts as physical science is; or else, if the indisputable facts are incongruous, it ought to confess that an explanation cannot be found. Let it be remembered that a sound agnosticism does not deny the truth of what it cannot understand; but it is, and to justify itself needs to be, an attestation that an understanding cannot be reached. On the problem of our moral inheritance it would seem wise as well as correct to admit that at least the Bible does not present a complete and entirely legible answer.

Can we then fall back on the modern doctrine of heredity? No doubt this doctrine lends support to the obviously biblical teaching that men are heirs to some degree of ancestral moral qualities. But the whole subject of heredity is in solution. The great rival theories of evolution are involved in it, and remain unsettled because of it. Are new species the product of a natural tendency toward variation, or of accumulated characteristics acquired from environment? The problem of acquired characteristics is distinctly a problem of heredity, and neither Darwinism nor Lamarkianism has been able to take and to hold the entire field.

Without exploring the entire field of evolution it is possible that we may obtain light as to our heritage by studying our own beginnings. Or the impossibility of a solution to problems in this remoter region will account in part for our inability to answer the questions which we have just been studying. It is, at all events, a subject which we cannot pass by.

5. The Beginnings

(1) Of the Soul

Whatever the mystery of the origin of human souls, that mystery would only be deepened by alleging that they began to be in another world, and existed in a timeless state before entering human bodies. Although the respectable name of Edward Beecher, the honored name of Julius Müller, the great name of Plato, and that of the hardly more poetical Wordsworth indorse this doctrine, it is left in our times for German children to believe that friendly storks brought them from the skies, or for childlike East Indians to accept the childish doctrine of metempsychosis. We ultra-moderns and Western folk trail no

> clouds of glory as we come
> From heaven, which is our home.

We bring no reminiscences of the vaster truth learned by us when we were yet with God. We bewail no freedom lost up yonder, nor do we find earth a penitentiary and our bodies the cells where, instead of reforming, we mayhap grow worse and worse. There is no direct indication of an origin before we became of the earth earthy, and the want of such an indication is not made good by any remoter "intimations."

The mystery is not relieved, it is even deepened, by the theory that God immediately creates a soul for each body, at birth or in the fœtal period. The only fact looking that way is the diversity in human souls. But great diversity exists between lesser creatures of the same species, and it seems a *reductio ad absurdum* for a scholarly advocate of creationism like the late Dr. Charles Hodge to accept, as logically involved in his theory, the distinct creation of life in every several beast and plant. While the grain of wheat clung to the ear it was alive,

sharing the life of its parent; when it fell did it abruptly lose the life it had, and as abruptly get a new principle of life? So infinite a multiplication of miracles is beyond belief. Indeed, the special creation of every human soul has to surmount the presumption that an occurrence in nature is always natural, not supernatural, not a miracle.

This insuperable difficulty would not be escaped by appeal to the widespread belief that God incessantly puts forth all the energy which is in the world, himself directly does all that is done. For if we should accept this somewhat popular doctrine, it would not follow that the divine energy, everywhere else continuous, is interrupted and specially renewed at the outset with every living thing, does not follow law, but is a distinct intervention. As an undisguised exception to God's ways, which are nature's ways, the special creation of every soul would need irresistible evidence. It would be necessary above all to show that nature could not do what is done.

The Bible does not smooth the path for this popular doctrine. It does not resolve the mystery of our origin by remanding it to an ultimate mystery, the relation of God to things and men. It is far from either expressly teaching or by implication intimating creationism. If, for example, the Master speaks of a birth from above (ἄνωθεν), a birth of which God is the immediate author, such a birth is not natural birth, but is expressly contrasted with natural birth (John 3 : 3-6). If the unique Epistle to the Hebrews calls God "the Father of spirits" (12 : 9), it also tells us that Levi paid tithes when he was in the loins of Abraham (7 : 9, 10), and indeed, that all Israel came out thence (ver. 5). We have here a curious illustration of the contradictory idea which runs along with the popular notion of the creation of souls, namely, that descent is from the father rather than from the mother. In common with the Bible we talk of

Adam's fall, not Eve's; and this way of thinking has won so entire and authoritative ascendency that in France the salic law forbade the descent of royal authority to queens or through them. It is the experience of stock-breeders that the male element is the progressive, and improvement can be far better secured by regard to this fact. But this curious fact greatly reenforces the objections, in the Bible and out of it, to the special creation of the life-principle in individuals. In his winsome as well as vigorous little book on "The Destiny of Man" the late John Fiske repeatedly spoke of man as the finest product of the Darwinian process of natural selection, but when he had to account for the human soul, declared that no other doctrine is scientific except the Platonic, that the soul is an effluence from Deity (page 42). But I dare say that Mr. Fiske would have been one of the last to agree that human souls were each and all separately created. Creationism cannot be our solution of the mystery of our individual origin. But to exclude the theories of preexistence and of special creation shuts us up to the theory of traducianism. Let us see how well and how ill it answers.

If souls do not preexist, and are not specially created, they must have a naturalistic origin; they must be propagated with the bodies which they animate. If, then, the presumption is heavy against creationism, it is conclusive in favor of traducianism, unless sufficient evidence to the contrary can be produced. It is not necessary to produce evidence for a natural origin of souls. This is to be taken for granted until the contrary is proved. But our concern is not so much with the truth of any theory as it is with the adequacy of the best theory to remove the mystery of the facts which lie at the very beginning of our existence. Of course the completer the evidence for a theory the more it explains. Its evidence consists in

its ability to account for the facts which demand an explanation. If it does not explain everything, it is so far incomplete, and so far liable to be displaced by some other theory. The only exception is a process of exclusion which rejects all theories but one, and accepts this one, not because it covers all particulars, but because no other theory is tenable. When we have heard what traducianism can say for itself we shall then know what remains to be said. The relation of Christian agnosticism and Christian knowledge will thus distinctly appear.

The assumption of its truth, in the absence of any possible alternative, is supported by extensive evidence. Such are the countless facts which afford a classification of living things in larger and smaller groups until we reach species within the bounds of which we find at least comparative stability in all the particulars which characterize a species. All these groups of specific characteristics, which present to rational beings the spectacle of order among all living things, are regarded by every one as propagated characteristics in plants, in beasts, and should be so regarded, for the same reasons, in the case of man.

If we would provide a scientific account for the origin of species, we must call up the fact of transmission by descent. Natural inheritance is essential, at all events, to evolution. Varieties arise within species; and these varieties, accumulated slowly, or leaped to abruptly, either in consequence of a spontaneous tendency to vary or as variation is induced by environment, become at length relatively fixed as new species. Few, if any, would now deny, as Agassiz did, that the various tribes of mankind have arisen in this way. Huxley said he needed but one Adam and Eve. All of which goes for nothing as an account of origins unless it serves this purpose through the propagation of characteristics.

How, then, are characteristics propagated? Do they belong to the physical organism only? This question almost answers itself. Racial differences among men are as noticeably mental, even moral, as physical. This is not all. It is but the least which can be said. The physical characteristics are largely referable to psychical characteristics. Entirely so, if we may trust the results of investigation thus far. The embryo of a human being at the first moment of its existence is indistinguishable from that of any other animal. In important physical characteristics the embryos of plants and animals are just alike. What makes it certain that the embryo of a man will not grow into a bird or lizard, a tiger or an ox? Nothing discoverable serves as a safeguard against such a transformation. No structural, no chemical, no mechanical character can be found in the fœtus, or seemingly may ever be hoped for there, which keeps a man a man and a fish a fish from the earliest moment of individual existence. Presumably the life-principle does this. It is the life-principle which so directs the processes of alimentation that a mature animal always retains his specific and his individual characteristics. There is no question as to this point on the part of those who believe in a life-principle; what question is there that the life-principle performs the same office from the beginning? If it keeps a man human, it made him so. If, then, the species of an animal is propagated, that which maintains the species is propagated. If the body of the individual is derived from parents, its life is so derived. The soul is the life-principle in man, and the human soul it would seem, must be propagated.

The closer our scrutiny the more certain this conclusion. At the first instant of its existence the body of a human being consists of a single cell. This cell is formed by the union of two cells, one contributed by the father,

one by the mother. The blending may be observed under the microscope in the case of lower orders. So far it is clear what takes place. It is clear also that both cells are alive, and that this is the reason why the resultant cell lives. The life in each cell is sufficient for that cell; the life in both conjoined suffices for the new cell. That is, as the parent cells unite to form an infant cell, their life-principles unite to form the life-principle of the infant cell. This account is afforded by the observed facts; but this is as unequivocally a propagation of souls as union of cells is propagation of body.

The latest physiological advance is the doctrine of the continuity of the germ plasm through all generations. According to this doctrine a human being all but loses his individuality. As a coral insect is never any more than a fraction in the community, so a man is never any more than a fraction in his ancestry. His generation is but an offshoot from the one reality, the ever-living, the immortal germ plasm. If in face of facts for such a doctrine we do not follow certain physiologists and deny that soul exists, we must at least admit that this account of heredity makes the soul as certainly propagated as the body is. The reason which we still have for crediting the existence of soul is the need there is of a substance to which psychical phenomena can be ascribed; precisely as we believe in body because there is need of a substance to which physical phenomena can be ascribed. Propagation is a phenomenon common to both body and soul.

Physiology, then, affords precisely the traducianist account of the soul's origin. No other account can be admitted by us when we look at the inadequacy of other theories, or at the presumption in favor of a natural origin, or at the facts which announce such an origin.

But does this theory answer to all the facts? Has it cleared up the mystery of propagation? Do we know

all about the origin of souls? On the contrary, the clearer our knowledge, the sharper grow the boundaries of our ignorance. The facts which suffice to establish traducianism enclose incalculable mystery. This is true alike as to the union of life-principles and as to the union of cells, as to the production of peculiarities in individuals, or the reproduction of characteristics in species, true even with regard to the presumption against any but a natural origin of souls. A glance should recognize this, and prolonged study could but deepen our wonder.

Of all beings a rational soul is the most distinct. Discreteness of personality is as certain as personality. That the thoughts, emotions, volitions of each are his own exclusively is as obvious as that he thinks, feels, and wills. How, then, could so distinct an entity ever be cloven off from another such, put forth merely as a shoot from a stalk, or rooted from a parent stem like a layer of grapevine? This puzzle would still confront the origin of souls if virgin birth were possible without miracle in the human race, as it seems to be in sea-urchins. Is there less obscurity in deriving so absolute an integer from two parent souls? The soul's unity is normally conscious. The soul has no parts, can have none; how, then, can it be made up from parts, or anything analogous to parts, which are supplied by two parents? What meaning can attach to such a phrase as "the father's contribution, or the mother's contribution of soul"? No matter how indisputable these contributions are, how imagine them? The progress of microscopic investigation has indeed led biological science to practical certainty as to the formation of the initial cell, and a concomitant formation of soul would seem to be all but palpably certain; but the union which the eye watches does not make any more comprehensible this other union which no eye can discern. Indeed, we are baffled by the very restriction that

we should not think of the occurrence as a physical fusion of material objects. Spirit is not material, and the explanation which virtually makes it so virtually gives up the existence of that entity the origin of which is to be explained.

Our difficulties do not stop here. Who can explain the mere physical union of two cells? It exactly reverses the subsequent life-processes. Cells tend to fission. They multiply by subdividing. Thus the body grows. Now why do these original *two* consent to blend for the formation of an individual *one?* That one itself begins at once to subdivide.

We may say that this initial exception to the whole process of living is due to sex, and say truly; but the question then becomes why the difference in sex of those two parent cells should effect this unique result. Recent discoveries and even recent theories fail to clear up the problem. If parthenogenesis by artificial means is possible for sea-urchins, and if it is produced by exclusively mechanical, chemical, or electric action of strong salts on unfertilized eggs, the mystery is but moved back one step. Cells in a living body continually reproduce themselves; how does the ovary alone produce a cell which can become a new sea-urchin? What is in either the ovum or the ovary to account for this capacity? If any one is disposed to carry speculation beyond this point, and maintain that the usual binary origination of an individual in only an effect on the ovum of inorganic salts from the male, how, then, account for the reproduction of the sire's peculiarities? This is an item of moment to the biologist; for to the male is largely due that differentiation which is the starting-point of the Darwinian evolution. The ovary at least is indispensable to parthenogenesis and to ordinary generation; has nature wasted her pains on the male? Is his function merely to secrete a

strong salt in solution? If so, will some one solve the mystery of the procedure as it stands, or as it is imagined, or as it is artificially effected in the case of certain lower creatures of the sea?

It may be alleged that the bisection of an ovum when treated with one or another strong salt is a mere contraction produced by the salt's theft of water from the ovum; it may be urged that not only ova elaborated by an ovary, but also ordinary cells are capable of producing new individuals, as one may prove for himself when he observes the reproduction of certain animals by fission, or when he makes new angle-worms by cutting their sections apart, or starts another rosebush or grapevine by thrusting a cutting into wet sand; but then it should be added that such facts are to be looked for only in lower orders of life, are without example in the higher orders, and that the production of new individuals out of common cells, together with the reproduction of such cells constantly going on in our own bodies, is as profound a mystery as any. We may observe the process of nutrition, but we cannot explain it, nor account for its possibility. The phenomena of life are one and all inexplicable, no matter how open to observation or how uninterestingly familiar.

But we are now concerned with the problem of beginnings. There is not the smallest prospect that it will ever be possible to understand how either the soul or the body originates; what insight, then, can we have into the reproduction of parental idiosyncrasies? What insight into their absence, or their absence in one generation and reappearance in the next? That is, what can be understood about the once too much emphasized yet actual phenomena of atavism? Does any problem become simpler when it involves not individuals, but races of mankind? Can we tell why Germans persist in being unlike French-

men, or why white men are in any particular either like or unlike yellow, brown, and black men? And if we throw the burden of proof where it belongs, on those who deny propagation of souls, if we credit nature with perpetuating the race of man, are we not amazed, even stupefied, at what nature is able to do? What, then, if we crowd into ever-narrowing limits the problem of origins and ask how the human race originated?

(2) Of the Race

Is an answer ready? Is an answer included in a doctrine of human evolution? If God made human beings out of simians, his intervention at once puts the process beyond explication; in what respect is the mystery more manageable if a strictly naturalistic evolution is affirmed? We may make the most of tendency to variation, or of stimulus by environment; we may claim, or we may deny, the transmissibility of acquired characteristics; we may insist upon the slowness of progression from species to species, or may be satisfied that the change was made *per saltum;* we have but lit upon facts which are to be explained. What we may then claim to know best, as hitherto, we know least.

But one is rash who says that the facts are easily come by. He is overconfident who has settled on any theory of man's origin. If it is the result of a gradual process, then, admitting that all the purely physical differences between men and apes, or between men and a race from which both apes and men have descended, could be wiped out by slow differentiation, it remains to ask how the transition is explicable from the beast's intelligence to a man's rationality. Shall we say, as some religious advocates of evolution do, as even Mr. Fiske did when he ascribed the body to a Darwinian evolution and the spirit to a divine effluence, that nature fitted up the body and

God imparted the spirit? I confess no theory seems to me so unscientific as this. It has to confront the fact that, while on the one hand disused organs slowly become atrophied, and at length may entirely disappear, organs develop into higher possibilities only by exercising the highest which they at present possess. There is always a strict correspondence between used organs and their offices, between faculties and functions. If nature can fit up a brain competent to be the organ of human thinking, it can give the power to think. Or if God must interpose to impart the power to think, he must make a corresponding change in the organ of thought. But to admit God's share, I say again, is to confess that we cannot understand.

Let us then imagine a slow development of the human from the bestial. We know that the human reason is specifically so different from the intelligence of a beast that the skull's capacity for brain which would serve the most manlike ape would be only three-quarters large enough for the smallest cranial capacity of an idiot, and only one-half that of the lowest savage. If, then, nature gradually produced men from beasts, by all signs she would have to support for ages a race of zanies, the most helpless of creatures. Such an evolution as this is impossible, certainly is incomprehensible. It would involve a loss of intelligence so far as the creature became human, and would put him below the beasts so far as he ceased to be a beast. It might indeed be said that this intermediate and incomprehensible period was leaped over; but much of the evidence for a close tie between men and apes would have to be overleaped with it. Besides which, all the explanations ventured of development from bestial intelligence to human resort to the possibility of just such a slow process as we see to be impossible; and if the leap were wide enough to carry a beast over the fathomless

abyss which yawns between simian and human intelligence, a difference more in the quality than the quantity of the intelligence, more in its species than its amount, the leap would be as inexplicable as the slow process would be. In fact, such a leap would be as hard to understand as would be the special divine creation of man from beasts.

It is not our function to favor or disfavor any theory of man's origin, but to point out the incomprehensibility of the subject. Yet I may perhaps be allowed to wander so far as to say that it is easier for me to believe in a divine creation of man from some lower animal, either slowly or suddenly, than in an exclusively naturalistic production of the human species by any process whatever. I must hold with Mr. Fiske, so far as this, that the only scientific account of human reason is one which ascribes it immediately to God; only it would seem to me necessary that the creation of a human spirit involved an equally creative change in the human body. It has long been known that there is correspondence between all bodily organs; such a correspondence must be produced, and it now exists, when reason finds in the body its suitable home.

(3) Of Life

We have not so far touched the rudiments of the problem as to our beginnings. If the evidence shows a genetic relation between man and beasts, the deeper question must be faced, What is the origin of the process called life, and of that strange "principle of life" to which we believe that the process is due? The process and the principle have persisted through all generations and all forms of life from lowest to highest. Was the process begun mechanically, perhaps chemically? Was the principle at first spontaneously generated? If so, how?

When we have found out how, the mystery might still remain how the non-living was capable of producing the living even in the discovered way of doing it. Another *how* might be needed to unfold the answer to the first. All who have attended to this topic of ultimate interest know that Darwin did not venture to explain the origin of life, but assumed the existence of life; also that so thoroughly seasoned investigators as Pasteur and Tyndall settled it that the living could not be experimentally produced from the non-living. The candid Huxley admitted, perhaps enjoyed the candor of admitting, that artifice could not effect spontaneous generation; and yet with all joy he confessed it an article of his scientific faith that if he had lived long enough ago he would have seen it take place in due course of nature. If so great faith is legitimate in the physical sphere against all experience in that sphere, may it not be legitimate in the spiritual sphere, when in harmony with all experience everywhere?

But it is not easy to justify Professor Huxley's faith. It could be justified only by the resolution of a mystery, the existence of which unresolved forbids such a faith and excludes all knowledge of how life originated. That mystery is that abiogenesis, or evolution of the living out of the non-living, is unimaginable so long as one admits what Huxley admitted, that the law of convertibility of energies does not apply between mind and matter. This is really an admission that physical energy cannot be converted into psychical. A seeming exception so sublime is of the first importance, and needs to be looked into.

There is a law which Hæckel calls "the law of substance," and which is more intelligibly called "the law of continuity." This law is really so simple as hardly to seem worth stating, so obvious as to look like a truism. It is that whatever is has been, and will be. Applied to things it gives us the indestructibility of matter; applied

to causation it gives us the convertibility of energy, or, as it was first called, the correlation and conservation of force. We have here to do with its second form only. By force I mean what everybody means, what Huxley defined as "the hypothetical cause of motion." Keeping in the background as much as possible the idea of force as a mysterious entity, we find it practically equivalent to the conception of energy as that which works, which effects changes in the physical sphere. Those changes are effected; and whatever it is that effects them, that is what we here refer to. All forms of it, call it energy or call it force, are at least ideally convertible into each other. When physical causation takes place, energy has changed its form. Heat, for instance, in producing steam has taken the form of kinetic energy; this, in running a dynamo, has taken the form of electric energy; electric energy, in turn, may be converted into heat or light, or back into kinetic energy, as when it drives a trolley car. Energy may incessantly change its form, yet is never either increased or diminished. All of this is familiar enough.

The practiced physicist, having invariable experience of continuity in physical objects and operations, when he approaches the psychical sphere takes for granted that continuity prevails here also. Without more ado he says that every change which the body causes in the mind must be a motion of the body transformed into a motion of mind, while every motion in the body which the will causes is a motion of the will itself (whether the will is or is not a bodily function) transformed into a motion of body. He says it, and for a good while keeps saying it, because he has never seen a motion which was not an earlier motion continued or transformed. He has taken for granted that the law of continuity must prevail between mind and matter, whatever mind is, whatever

matter is. But all efforts to demonstrate this have ended in demonstrating the contrary. If an impact of five foot-pounds on your body causes a sensation, none of the energy of the impact is converted into the sensation; all of it is taken up in physical results. Or if volition releases in your arm an energy of five foot-pounds, the energy exhibited is proportionate to molecular changes in the body. The will in releasing it did not exhibit a releasing energy. No one knows how the will did it. This much is clear: there is no such thing as psychical energy. If there were, it would be convertible with physical energy; for all energies are interconvertible. The relation of brain to mind is incomprehensible.

According to Custis' "Recollections" the well-born but somewhat presuming Gouverneur Morris one morning on a wager struck Washington smartly on the shoulder and cried, "How are you, general?" The general turned on him a look and said nothing; but Morris drew back among his young companions and declared that nothing would tempt him again to encounter that look. The energy of the very personal liberty which he took caused in Washington's mind a perception and an emotion; the energy of the gaze did the same for the audacious Morris. What actually happened? No physicist will need to be assured that the entire energy of the blow was used in producing physical results in the body of the austere *pater patriæ;* none of it was abstracted and taken up into his astonishment and indignation. In return it was something that happened in his mind which caused his formidable gaze; yet none of his emotion was converted into the physical state of the stern blue eyes which gazed. To be sure, there was real energy in the look; there was blood heat in the glance which rebuked and frightened Morris. It was the kind of story which in those days people liked to hear about Washington.

If a modern psycho-physicist could at once have haled them both into his laboratory, and clapped his instruments on them, no doubt he might have discovered some lingering "physical equivalent of thought," and he ought to have been looking out for a psychical equivalent of energy in both subjects of the experiment; but he could not have detected any convertibility between these equivalents. Agnosticism is the inside truth of the story.

No one is at liberty to say in the name of science that the will, in releasing bodily energy, puts forth energy in amount so small as to be undiscoverable. So complete absence of facts forbids so prodigious a theory; so negative a situation does not amount to so important an affirmative. Furthermore, convertibility is reciprocal. A mental energy of volition could be converted into a physical energy only on condition that a physical energy in turn could be converted into a mental state. This will hardly be affirmed; the first must therefore be denied. And most significantly, if the mind's energy cannot be traced in bodily movements which were caused by a volition and ended in a blow, this is because such a tracing is unimaginable. There is no convertibility, because there is no quality in common between mind and matter, as urged a few pages above. But to biology life, whether vegetative or animal, is one. What in life as life is incomprehensible in one case is so in the other. Now science does not begin with positing the inconceivable. It rejects unimaginable hypotheses as irrational. Since life, then, could not imaginably begin with a self-conversion of the physical into the psychical, we must leave the matter of its origin where Huxley and Tyndall reluctantly left it; we do not know how life began. Agnosticism is insight into what is, when it recognizes what cannot be. It is partial understanding, when it recognizes what is not to be understood. It is perhaps all but the whole truth.

Since the lamented John Fiske has ceased to instruct and delight his generation, I may be allowed to mention a note from him. Referring to the statement in his book, "Through Nature to God," that convertibility does not hold as between matter and mind, I argued for two conclusions: first, that monism, either materialistic or spiritualistic, could not be true; secondly, spontaneous generation never took place, and never could, for it would be a conversion of the physical into the psychical. He replied, "Your argument seems to me entirely sound." It was a momentous admission from perhaps the leading evolutionist philosopher of America, although in harmony with the evident tendency of his thought in recent years. I do not see how his admission could be disputed from his premises by a strictly scientific or philosophical mind. The origin of life is an unfathomable mystery. We do not know and we cannot know how it took place. Undeniably life began. What is observed in the way of atomic activity in inorganic substances is not a vital process. All these activities might be resolved into electrical phenomena, as the way now is with speculative physics; but vital processes are not the same as non-vital, whatever else the non-vital may be, and however the non-vital may be made use of by the vital. They remain separated by the "whole diameter of being," and must be so regarded until mutual convertibility is established. Then, when organic and inorganic processes are capable of being interchanged, organic and inorganic objects will be the same; the principle of life might be a principle of death; the organic energy which builds up will be all one with the inorganic energies which serve long, then revolt, obtain the upper hand, and pull down what they had been forced to build. But when this identification is made out, the mystery will be thickened beyond computation. If not as to his beginnings, at least in

his highest development, a living man knows that he is not the same as dead; and so long as he knows this, knows it well, and knows a good part of what it means, he may claim that the difference, the antipodal contrast, is to be traced back to incomprehensible beginnings in an act of God. The utmost stretch of knowledge will thus include a wise and reverent agnosticism. Confessedly, how God does things we do not know. If it is in nature's way, it cannot be known to be specially his doing.

Our conclusion is not shaken by the recently observed production, through the action of radium on materials previously organic, of "radiobes," crystals perhaps, or bubbles of gas more probably, as suggested by Sir William Ramsay, which in many ways simulate bacteria, but unlike bacteria, are soluble in water. Not even radium is yet capable of evolving the living out of the non-living. When it does so, then we may have to consider radium itself as of all things the most vehemently alive.[1]

I do not forget that some who argue for a "chemical basis of life" claim that spontaneous generation is not to be regarded as an occurrence of long ago, but as constantly going on, that the appropriation of food by the digestive organs is a true spontaneous generation. But this is a singular oversight of the real nature of the problem as to origins. The problem is not how life is communicated, nor how it sustains itself, but how it began when no life already existed. The living digestive tract may convert food into living stuff, and build it into living tissues; but how different this from a spontaneous self-animation of the food. Put the chemically perfect food into a dead stomach, and will it live? Will it make that stomach live? If, let us say, nature could build up a complete human organism (as Frankenstein did) with-

[1] See popular account by Prof. J. B. Burke in "Harper's Weekly" for August 26, 1905; and Ramsay in "Independent," September 7, 1905.

out the intervention of a life-principle (as Frankenstein did not, for life had provided all his materials for him) would not nature be producing just what we call a corpse, the deadest object in the world? Not organic completeness, nor chemism, nor mechanics institutes the process called life. A life-principle must do this, or it is not done. But science can no more know anything of a life-principle than of an act of God. Both he and it are quite beyond the reach of all its instruments and reagents. Science could know only what nature does, and spontaneous generation would be nature's only way of originating either the process or the principle called life. Since, then, the evidence for spontaneous generation is inadequate, since adequate evidence is apparently unattainable, science can know nothing as to how life began. Or if theistic philosophy alleges what science cannot know, that life, in either sense of the word, began in an act of God, the problem is still as far as ever from solution, how God produced the first living creature. To a witness it might seem nature's own act, even if clearly beyond the capability of nature. Here, let us acknowledge, the fullest knowledge is confessed inability to know.

III

THINGS

CHAPTER III

THINGS

1. Matter

THUS far we have gone about nothing here and there how scanty our knowledge is even at points where we might claim to be best informed. All the while we seem to have taken for granted that what we really know about is matter. Knowledge of matter through the senses we have assumed to be the type of all knowledge, if not itself the only real knowledge. But in so doing we have merely fallen in with what we have often been told, that philosophy is the realm of opinion and religion an affair of faith, while science, meaning physical science, is sure of itself and can guarantee all that it asserts. But now we must face the fact that the world of things is a world of opinion too; that when it comes to speculation, the adept of science can expatiate as well as another; and as for belief, to deny him the vulgar privilege of believing would be to take the heart out of his attempts further to know.

In point of fact, we may not be better informed about the constitution of matter than of spirit. Some day the tables may be turned, and the knowing ones be found insisting that what we thoroughly understand, inside and outside, round about and intimately, is soul and not body, spirit not matter. Yet such a possibility may be only one of the dreams that linger while a man is waking and vision but half real. It could hardly be more surprising than it is to find a daring leader in physics, such as Prof. J. J. Thomson, of Cambridge University, confide to us that "we in fact know more about the 'electric fluid'

than we know about such fluids as air or water," [1] or to hear a friend of my own, a prudent physicist in a great university, with cheerful emulation say in the stillness of his own house that we, that is, he and his scientific colleagues, have found out almost all about, not spirit and matter, but ether, the heretofore hypothetical and elusive ether. Alas, we must now take note of reasons for suspecting that, as to matter and ether both, what we thus know best we know least.

What, then, is matter? The only answer so far is a guess, at some part of it a guess. If we make sure what is the essential property of matter, if with Spinoza we insist that it is extension, or with the modern physicist hold it to be inertia, still what at bottom matter is, and what accounts for its properties, essential or variable, would remain an open question.

A view not yet forgotten by chemists takes it that, if a quantity of matter, solid, liquid, or gaseous, were broken up into bits so small that they could be no further divided, these ultimate particles, these atoms, would be as solid as any mass of them seems to be. But certain distinctively metaphysical philosophizers will have it that, inasmuch as all we know about an object is through the manifestation of the forces in it, force is all that we have a right to say there is in it; in other words, matter consists of force only. But if so, the question is sprung upon us what force is. On every hand, where one is metaphysical enough to believe in the existence of force at all, it is held to be an immaterial, spiritual entity; and thus matter is reduced to "spirit at work"; the atoms are but minute centers of force, nothing but force, not force inhering in a *thing*. But this is maddening to a

[1] On the new theory of electricity see Thomson's "Electricity and Matter," Sir Oliver Lodge's more popular "Electric Theory of Matter" in "Harper's Magazine," August, 1904, and Frederick Soddy's "Radio-Activity, an Elementary Treatise."

physicist like Clerk-Maxwell, for instance. He knows force, or energy, only as resident in matter, and matter only as communicating energy. Neither one can be known nor can be thought of as existing apart from the other. Therefore, if the physicist regards the atoms as centers of force, the atomic forces must inhere in small bits of something, and that something in the last analysis is ether. The ether he takes to have physical properties, to be at least virtually material, more substantial than spirit; it is like a perfect fluid pervading space.

But another theorist, to whom metaphysics is an offense, and who scents metaphysics in any notion of force as efficient cause, positively abjures all belief in force or energy as an entity. He will hear to nothing less tangible, less positive, more ideal than motion. Matter and motion make up his universe; matter in motion is all that for him exists; the convertibility of energies is an ill name for the convertibility of motions. Of course, this very abjuring of metaphysics is itself metaphysics. This positivism is negationism. It is not making its way, this bold attempt to affirm by denial. The convictions of present-day workers appear to be closed against it. They ask for reality, and instead of making naught of energy, are nearer making of it a calculable lot of downright stuff, a substance to be reckoned with, not a whim to be puffed away. It is a reactionary theory, so confessed. For some time now it has been tying its hopes to electricity, and goes clean back to Doctor Franklin in regarding electricity as a fluid. One is even reminded of Newton's long discarded doctrine that light is an emanation, a stream of particles, and loses breath to find modern theory in the most respectable quarters going over to that laughable "substantialism" with which one Wolford or Wilfred Hall used to disgust all science which was not quackery. At any rate, we give such welcome as

eager learners must to an inside explanation which comes to us as veracious. We hearken to the tremendous generalization, worked out by mathematics and backed by experiment, which hardly falls short of demonstrating that electricity is a thing, the one thing which explains all other things, and only *waits to be itself explained.*

There is no more brilliant or perhaps influential physicist now than the Cambridge professor, J. J. Thomson, who would have us believe as he does that matter consists of electricity, and of nothing else. This does not exclude the ether, for electricity has the ether for basis. That chemical force is electric was first taught, he tells us, by Berzelius, afterward by Davy and Faraday, while Helmholz too declared "that the mightiest of the chemical forces are electrical in their origin," and the Swedish Arrhenius is to-day winning great fame by explaining chemical solution in that way. Neither the Swedish nor the English professor is likely ever to have heard that twenty or thirty years ago a respected and venerable citizen of Providence, Mr. Zachariah Allen, put forth a book which explained all the doings of the universe as electric, and had something worth while to say for it too. There is electricity enough in the air to-day, one would guess, to carry over its Hertzian waves the telepathic despatches that need no wire; and it would seem as though some kind of electricity had got into our thinking, and was going to convert all that is gross and all that is refined into that subtle and awful essence. We may cerainly lend an ear, and give faith without flinching to what may be regarded as the best guess yet. But it is only faith, not knowledge. Never is a new truth or method ever proposed as an instrument of inquiry, but too much is expected of it. In this experience electricity will doubtless share the fate of evolution and the grand law of the conservation of force.

According to Professor Thomson, while we do not know what electricity is, it behaves like a fluid which is made up of atoms abounding in energy. We do not know all we would like to about positive electricity, but we may well stop a moment to wonder that of late we have found out so much about negative electricity. We now know enough about it to tempt us to believe that matter consists entirely of this mysterious fluid, if it is a fluid. Thus according to Thomson, as interpreted or supplemented by Lodge, the smallest old-fashioned atom, that of hydrogen, is a shell of positive electricity which holds from eight hundred to a thousand electrons, or corpuscles, of negative electricity, that tumble about in this minute space with relatively as much room to spare as the planets have in the solar system. Now and then one of these mutually repelled electrons breaks away, bursts out of its shell of positive electricity, and goes so far toward turning the atom into substance of another kind. Now an atom of radium fairly swarms with electrons. It encloses, say two hundred thousand, instead like hydrogen, a thousand of them. They have room enough too, if they would only be quiet; but being all of a sort electrically, they elbow each other out, and so produce the radio-activity which has lately set the world a wondering. Or if positive electricity is not like a hive enclosing the busy negative electrons, it is like a branch on which they swarm, and from which a few dart away.

We are also to regard the ether as made fibrous to some extent by streams of electric energy, straining like threads drawn tight. The threads which pass through a minute curved space make a bundle, a Faraday tube. If a thrill gets started across one of these tubes, it runs like a wave along its entire length; and that is light. Now the tube is itself driven sidewise, not endwise, through the ether, like a leaf fluttering to the ground, or as a log

would be driven through water, if pushed or drawn at all points equally along its whole length. So driven the Faraday tube, again like a log in water, drags quantities of ether with it; and "the *whole* mass of any body is just the mass of ether surrounding the body which is carried along by the Faraday tubes associated with the atoms of the body." Ether, therefore, is to be credited with a "density . . . immensely greater than that of any known substance." But what ether is, or electricity is, the two which together amount to everything, one can only guess. Or one may refuse to guess, and abide in confessed and wise agnosticism as to all except what electricity can do with ether.

This electric theory of matter is regarded as explaining all physical phenomena except gravitation. Gravitation, unlike light, heat, and electricity, which take time, seems, so far as observation of it has extended, to act simultaneously through space. If so, it is like a rigid rod extending, say, from earth to a fixed star. When the star end moves, at the same instant the end which touches the earth moves too, although over a distance which light might need a century to traverse. Gravitation is therefore unlike a wave across the direction of its ray; it is a thrust or a pull all at once. And this is more than electricity is able to explain. But not to explain gravitation is a wide gap in the electric theory of matter; for when it comes to summing up all that is going on, these two, namely, gravitation and heat, attraction and repulsion, the stress toward fixity and the straining toward change, appear to divide the work between them, and to answer to the facts pretty well—at least as the lay mind has been taught to see the facts.

Now who is ever going to find out for us the ultimate truth about the constitution of matter? And as to the ether about which we, that is they, know so much, how

are we going to put together two such facts as that by hypothesis it is, to begin with, so perfectly fluid, so free from friction as to allow waves to pass through it unhindered, and at the same time has such density, which seems like viscosity in this case, so much molasses-like consistency, as to go dragging after the tense thread of the Faraday tube, "stretching across the atom between the positively and negatively electrified constituents"? Read again: "The whole mass of any body is just the mass of ether surrounding the body which is carried along by the Faraday tubes associated with the atoms of the body." If ether surrounding a body is carried along when the body moves, it is because the ether which follows clings to the ether pushed before the body; and this is viscosity. When the greatest density is also ascribed to the ether, in order to account for the accumulation of mass in this way, the greatest viscosity seems also to be ascribed. How else does the explanation explain? If I say that a blunt scow, when towed, carries along a great deal of water at its bow and its stern, and that the weight of this water must be added in counting the energy required to move the clumsy boat, I am certainly assuming that water is not a perfectly frictionless medium. And I do not see how the most daring physicist is able to avoid a scientific paradox when he ascribes similar phenomena to ether, yet without denying the fundamental assumption of its perfect fluidity.

2. Force

We have been noting how short distance we can pry into substance with all the aid of the newest spectacles. What are we to think of energy, a question already touched on? Energy is essential to things. Substance without energy would be without quality, and unthinkable. Substance is, energy does. Between them they include

all things. If we are not to think of electricity any longer as energy, but as substance, we have simply to study the energy which it owns; for it is on account of its energy that electricity becomes worth attention. Thomson says electricity has all the properties of an atom; but more than ever it reveals that force which Huxley defined as "the hypothetical cause of motion," and in so defining gave the best definition of what people have in mind as force. It is that which does everything that is done. Causal efficiency is what we mean by force. We cannot get rid of this idea about it. The name force is established, and for common use is good enough. But what is force? It is not matter; it is what makes matter go, and even what makes matter to be of one sort rather than another. Must those who believe in both matter and spirit believe that force is spirit? Or is it merely *like* spirit; spiritual, not spirit, a *tertium quid* in the world? Maybe it is something which emanates from spirit, though not identical with it. Lotze would have us regard things as "actions of God." But here again is trouble for the inquiring mind. An action is not an entity. To wave the arm is not a thing; something which exists in addition to the arm. To wave the arm is only to shift its place. An action of God cannot be a thing. If, then, we modify this Lotzean notion a little, as some monists ask us to, and make force an effluence from God's will, a "dynamic aspect" of divine reason, can we now say we know what things are and what force is? We shall find science there, standing sentry. We must give as countersign a word which tells how physical energy can become psychical, or we cannot pass. Unless such a change can take place, the mind neither of man nor of God can be a fountain of energy. We may say that reason is "dynamic" when it forms a volition; but it is not so. No one knows how volition does anything. Least of all

do we see the will emitting energy, becoming truly dynamic, and so itself a quality in matter, or a motor of masses.

Though force or energy does everything, and though we know not a little about what it achieves, we do not in the slightest degree know what energy or force itself is. God's will may create it, our will certainly controls it; but this is only what can be done with it, or what it can do; not what it is. It is many years since Professor Tyndall looked into the great gulf fixed between motions of molecules and states of consciousness, confessing what Father Abraham said in the parable, "They which would pass from hence cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence." The gulf is still there. No one knows how to get across. It is certain as ever that energy never overleaps nor tunnels under it. And since we know nothing at all as to how mind and body act on each other, we cannot explain energy by will. No doubt we wake up to the reality of causation when we find our wills are first causes of volitions, and that volitions release our bodily energies; but this does not reveal to us what cause is, nor what force is, nor what matter is. There is much that we can learn *about* matter and force; but how little we can know what *they are*. And so the progress of science, if it does not narrow the boundaries of genuine agnosticism, at least is making them more distinct.

IV

GOD

IV

GOD

1. The Maker

HOWEVER little we know about the constitution of things, all agree that matter is pervaded by motion. We have then to note what degree of assured knowledge, and what ranges of invincible ignorance the fact of universal motion involves.

As to the fact there is no question. If a diamond seems so still, if it is the very type of fixity, this is because its inner activities are so incomparably intense. If the wood of this desk top feels so hard, if I cannot press my fingers between its fibers, this is because the fibers cling to each other and resist my finger with active energy greater than mine. I strike the desk and it strikes back with a reaction equal to my action. When the internal motion of an object cannot be perceived among its cells or smallest discernible constituents, as often it cannot be, the motion must be referred to a seat still deeper. It may be between the molecules; or within the molecules and between the atoms; or, according to the new electric theory of matter, within the atoms, and inconceivably swift and strong. So swift is the motion as to be hardly less than that of light, the swiftest thing that flies; so strong, that a transfer of the energy of motion from within an atom to objects outside it would produce effects outdoing the claims made a few years ago for the mysterious Keeley motor. The physicist with his estimate of them seems to take almost an unfair advantage of the layman. For example, Prof. J. J. Thomson ciphers it out that the kinetic

energy in one atom of hydrogen, the minutest atom known, "would be sufficient to lift a million tons through a height considerably exceeding one hundred yards."[1] The layman can't believe it, but must.

We agree with Heraclitus of long ago, *παντα ρεῖ*, everything is in motion. But all that moves, or is moved, changes. Even the atoms are now believed to be changing. There is only relative fixity anywhere. The sole impossibility is a metaphysical one: things cannot become what they are not. If an atom of one sort becomes an atom of another sort, it was from the first of such a sort as to take the form of two sorts. Certainly we cannot credit any object with being and not being at the same time. Not even Hegel's famous "becoming" amounts to such a contradiction as this, however near it may seem to it. But since all physical objects move, all are undergoing change in consequence of external or internal motion, or of both.

As every successive state of an object is due to changes in it, so every change has occupied a corresponding period of time. From the insect which lives but a day to the sea-monster which survives the ages, with every hour the creature is one hour older, one hour's worth different from what it had been sixty minutes earlier. So constant is the ratio between the lapse of time and the results of unceasing modification that the Master's challenge does not after all seem so grotesque: "Who by taking thought can add one cubit to his age?" We might measure time with a yardstick, and bodily states by the clock. Your body cannot possibly be one second older than it is. If you say you are a hundred years old, every one knows enough about the rate of change in human bodies to know that it has not taken a hundred years to make you what you are. Your present state

[1] "Electricity and Matter," p. 111.

would have been reached say seventy-five years ago, if its existence had begun a century since. There is no question as to this. Your body cannot have been one second older than it is; nor can a tree, nor a rock in the valley, nor the valley. Can the earth? Can the universe?

Geology undertakes to estimate the time required to produce the present state of the earth's crust. If the process which has brought the earth to its present stage had begun a million years earlier, would not the present stage, other things being equal, have been reached a million years sooner? If you do not feel sure as to this, why not? Is there any reason? If we are not as certain of our conclusion as in the case of short-lived organisms, is it because change takes time in the organic, but not in the inorganic? Or is there always proportion between change and time in the one case, and not always in the other? Or is it because we can observe alteration going on in the living, and are skeptical about changes which we cannot watch in the non-living? Or is change sure of its due time in the case of every several object, but not in the aggregate of all objects? Could it be real with a cricket, and unreal of a cosmos? How, after all, can we make doubt or hesitation on this point seem excusable even to ourselves?

There is a full million years of difference between what the earth now is and what it was a million years ago, or what it will be a million years hence; what if the process began twenty million years ago, or is to keep up twenty millions more, does the ratio between time and change cease because the time is so long and the changes are so many? Suppose, then, the process has been going on from eternity, how long since should the existing situation have been reached? What definite, that is, what measurable and limited, state of things could have been brought about by immeasurable and unlimited changes?

In an eternal series of changes which moment would be the right moment for a state of things discernible and admitting only discernible lapse of time? If you pitch upon yesterday as the proper date for a given stage, why might not that stage have been reached the day before yesterday, or the first of last year? Would not every moment in all eternity be the wrong moment for any given stage in the process of the world's development? Is not physical science, then, at a stand whenever it would run physical processes back of time into eternity? Is not agnosticism here imperative?

The instance which one fixes on for observing the earth presents a state of facts, and a state of facts corresponding to the instant chosen. This aspect and instant have been reached together after just so many instants and just so many changes since any earlier date which one selects in the past. From that point onward everything may be regularly accounted for, and approximately measured; but what of that earlier situation which you have measured from? Did it require no precise, though perhaps unknown time for its preparation? Could any instant in all eternity be the right instant for any state of facts present, past or future, brought about by changes? If so, how so? Any clear situation demands and will have a definite beginning and a definite history for its definite aspects; but the very idea of an eternally distant beginning is self-contradictory. If there had to be a beginning, there could be no eternity, except as an eternity preceded the beginning.

One may resolutely refuse to think about the problem of eternity; or one may say that the problem cannot be solved. And this is what ought to be said. Why accept an absurd position merely for the sake of holding to an infinite regression of processes? If, then, I look either at a single object, or at the aggregate of all objects,

and see it changing—see that the changes take time, and then add that it took eternity, have I not put myself out of court? If I would rather be absurd than acknowledge the limitations of physical knowledge, am I not still more absurd? Am I not simply offering the preposterous in place of the unknown? Am I not forcing a claim to know what obviously no one knows, when I posit an unlimited process for the production of a limited and measurable result? In other words, when we frankly face the idea of eternity in the past, do we not encounter a revolting absurdity in the conception of a succession of finite steps which began an eternity ago? In still other words, if we resort to sheer physical analysis, and a simple analysis, of the present facts, can we not certify ourselves that motion had a beginning because productive change began, and that this beginning was in finite time because the result is finite? It is, of course, an unwelcome predicament for a physicist who undertakes to explain every datum in physics. He cannot know aught of an absolute beginning, a beginning before which nothing had taken place; and, on the other hand, he may find it intolerable to own that beyond a period indefinitely distant, it is impossible for his analysis to go. Yet this predicament has many times been candidly faced, and the acknowledgment frankly made that science loses herself in the mist of the nebula, and can no further venture.

Indeed, the nebular hypothesis offers a curious confirmation of our agnosticism about the regression of physical processes toward either an aboriginal or an infinitely remote beginning. According to this theory the heavenly bodies which belong to any system, for instance the solar system, were formed from a vast, rolling cloud of "star-dust," through a process of alternate contraction and expansion. The farther forward this process goes, the compacter the once nebulous mass; while the

further back it is traced, the more widely dispersed the nebula. It is quite possible to believe in an indefinite, but not in an infinite regression of the process. Because at an infinite distance in time the particles of star-dust would be at infinite distances in space; and at such a distance they would be out of each other's reach. It does not need Clerk-Maxwell's authority, afforded in his "Energy and Matter," to certify this conclusion. Any one can see that, when dispersed to infinite distances, it would be impossible for the particles of star-dust ever to gather into a star-cloud. To trace the history of a nebula back to eternity is to trace it virtually into non-entity. It would be to reach a state of facts from which no physical result could issue, and which, therefore, must be left out of account by physics. If we may find anything of truth in the nebular hypothesis, and in outline it seems necessarily true, the facts of nature end in the incognizible.

The correspondence of motion to time would not be in the least affected if we accept the prophecy in which Lodge follows Crooks,[1] and "look to the time when some laboratory workers will exhibit matter newly formed from stuff which is not matter." Since an atom may now be broken up, as Thomson and his followers believe, into constituent electrons, the process may possibly be reversed, and electrons combined into matter. But they will not so combine in the laboratory until the laboratory workers get everything ready. This readiness can never have been reached in nature unless first the electrons had been duly assembled. Whether we have an almost boundless cloud of star-dust or barely a few electrons to deal with, a *beginning must be made,* or matter as known to us is not formed into worlds.

Now all this is equivalent to saying that, by a process

[1] "Harper's Monthly," August, 1904, p. 388.

of exclusion, we are shut up to believing in a Maker of all things. Our agnosticism is converted into knowledge. Our agnosticism has become distinctively Christian. Inasmuch as all which *is* has reached its present state through motion, and motion which ends in so definite results has itself necessarily been definite in amount, let us not forget the axiom that matter does not begin its own motions. Science cannot know how it came to move; but in confessing so science leaves the way open for the theistic conclusion that a Being not himself material started the automatic engine which has worked out all the results that we see. We do not yet find that he is the Being whom we call God. We do not need now to ask whether he brought matter into existence when he set it in motion. We do not yet know whether he keeps it in existence, constantly energizing and guiding the All. But we may stoutly claim, indeed, we have no choice but to conclude, that, inasmuch as science cannot assure us of an eternity of motion, therefore a Being not himself subject to change, or, what is equivalent to this, not material, effected the beginning at least of those physical processes which in turn have effected every physical result in the world. So far the Maker is the Architect, an eternal molding Spirit, who can himself act without undergoing change.

But the instant this conclusion is reached we hear the staggering challenge, why did the Maker wait an eternity before giving form to the universe? Or, if he could wait so long, how is it that he waited no longer, that even yet the moment has arrived proper for him to create in? We cannot imagine how any moment would be the right moment for the Maker. We face the paradox that every moment in eternity would be the wrong moment for any given stage in an *uncreated* series, and every moment would equally be the wrong moment for God to *create*

in. There is no right moment for any uncreated state of things; but then there is no right moment for the act of creation. We know as well as by means of physical analysis we can know anything that the physical universe once began to be; but we are as ignorant as metaphysical analysis can leave us how to create could ever be consistent with the unchangeability of a spiritual Creator. To create would be to transport himself out of eternity into time, and to effect for himself, if not also in himself, an incalculable change.

Still, we do not admit that we are as ignorant of the fact that the world was made at some definite period, reckoned back from the present, as we are ignorant how the Maker could select a definite period, reckoned forward from eternity. Why not? Because the insolubility of the metaphysical problem does not set aside the plain meaning of the physical evidence. This is ample justification for so much certitude in the face of so much uncertainty. Not because the difficulty is metaphysical and the certainty physical; but because the certainty belongs to the comprehensible realm of the finite, in fact, expressly insists on the finite; while the difficulty belongs to the incomprehensible realm of the infinite, indeed, refers exclusively to the infinite. The palpable facts as we find them lead us back to a point where they began to be; why try to determine what antedated the beginning? That beginning is the earliest token that a Maker existed; can we refuse to accept that token until we have first satisfied ourselves in what fashion he existed before the first indication of his existence? Must we know what he did before the first thing which he has been known to do? Or must we doubt that he was, unless we are informed how it went with him before time began? From the finite characteristics of the universe in any respect the finiteness of the universe in that respect is to be inferred. The

characteristics of the universe in respect of past duration are exclusively finite; it is itself, therefore, to be regarded as finite in duration—the universe has not always been; but the characteristics of the Maker in respect of past duration are all illimitable, and a paradox ought to be looked for at the point where the illimitable touches the limited.

What, then, have we found to be the relation of agnosticism to knowledge with regard to the origin of the orderly universe? It is certain that its well-ordered evolution has been due to motion; it is certain that its motion has had a beginning; but it is equally certain that science can know nothing of such a beginning. Our necessary ignorance about origins, from the point of view of physical science, shuts us up to the conclusion of theistic philosophy, that a Being not himself subject to change, therefore immaterial and eternal, instituted the cosmic processes by beginning cosmic motion. But the singular difficulty at once arises, why he caused this process to begin at a date which may be ideally, if not actually, reckoned back from the present, but cannot even in idea be reckoned forward from the depths of eternity. If we were bound to supply a reason why cosmic history began when it did in order to justify belief that it ever began, then physics would be unworthy of credence, open information would not only lead to but amount to dense ignorance, and we would be facing the anomaly of a universe demanding a Maker while the Maker precluded the universe. But satisfactorily to account for our confessed inability to know at one point guarantees our knowledge at another. Because finite minds could not know why an eternal Spirit was self-moved to start the clock on whose dial ages are the hours, we need not doubt, we are free to insist that time began only at *the will* of the self-moved Spirit. It is psychologically possible

that such a Spirit could be self-moved; it is physically impossible that matter could be self-moved.

Two suggestions of opposite tenor are believed by some thinkers to solve the problem of beginnings, and so to cure agnosticism on this head. One of these suggestions touches the cosmic side, the other the divine side of the problem.

It is admitted that any system of worlds, say again the system to which our earth belongs, requires but a limited period to reach its present state; but it is argued that this period began and will end with a tumbling nebula produced by collision of the orbs, former or present, out of whose materials the system was, is, or is to be, composed. In other words, the system's series of stages constitute a cycle, and the present cycle is only the latest of an infinite number of cycles, extending back into eternity. The *motion* of the universe is therefore eternal, while the existing *system* is temporal.

But this proposed solution overlooks one incontrovertible fact: no cycle reproduces its predecessor. An incessant dissipation of energy in the form of heat is going on from the sun and all his planets. The next cycle will begin with far less energy than belonged at its opening to the present cycle, and its history must be proportionately brief. In fact, it is difficult to imagine how any process of nature can convert the solar system into a nebula again, or make of it at most anything but one vast orb contracting into the lifelessness of eternal cold. On the other hand, the last cycle preceding ours must have had a history immeasurably longer than that of what seems to be our own final cycle. And the cycles must be as different in other respects as in duration. Prodigiously different exhibitions of the active agent heat must produce prodigiously different phenomena. Waiving, then, all other objections to the theory of cycles,

we still have to recognize that the lapse of time required to produce a given cycle is definite and limited; and so the same objection will hold against this reconstruction of cosmic history as against the theory of an uninterrupted and eternal progression; namely, in an eternal series of cycles every age is the wrong age for any given cycle.

The stupendous fact of an impending exhaustion in the solar system of the productive energy heat is not at all adequately offset by the recently noticed recovery by thorium of the radiant energy with which it had parted. A bit of thorium may very well take in energy from the ocean of electricity which envelops the earth; but the sun and his planets, in pouring forth heat with incalculable lavishness into the depths of space, are without any means of recovering from the loss. Not but that ways have been proposed; but they are as idle for this purpose as though the solar system waited for them on the interposition of man. It has been for instance guessed that there is a limit to the ether, so that heat is reflected back into foci into which planets or suns may chance to fall; and the doctrine of the essential sphericity of space teaches that a ray of heat would, after infinite journeyings, return to its starting-point. But these are both futile guesses. The one was devised for the occasion in face of all the facts; for these go to show that the ether, if it exist at all, is without limit. The other builds on a definition of a straight line, familiar, indeed, and simple, but which can be replaced by a definition that leaves a straight line straight, even when run out into infinity.[1]

An opposite suggestion would dispose of the difficulty

[1] Clifford's "Lectures and Essays" show with almost preternatural lucidity how the sphericity of space may be deduced from the definition of a straight line as the shortest distance between two points. But, with submission to the transcendental geometers, I venture to believe, being abetted therein by more than one professional mathematician, that it is possible so to define a straight line as to escape this misuse. Thus, a straight line is one, the revolution of which would not change the position of any of its points. Obviously, the revolution of the curved line would involve incessant change of place for all except its terminal points.

of imagining one moment in all eternity fitter than another for God to begin the work of creation. It urges that God never began to act, that he was active from eternity, and creation continuous from eternity. But to this theory it must be objected that, although it seems quite natural to God, it is opposed to the nature of things. Things, as has already been argued, give every sign of beginning in time. They allow only limited time for their production. If it should be part of the guess that the product of the Creator's eternal activity did not at first take the form of things but of spirits, we would have to deal with another difficulty, that spirit and matter are now so incapable of conversion either one into the other as to make it incredible that they were ever so converted.

It seems warrantable, then, to conclude that the very utmost lengthening of knowledge backward brings us to a state of nebulosity in things to which exactly corresponds the nebulosity of knowledge. Science, that knows the utmost which sense can know, knows at last, as to what is first, just nothing at all about what she knows best. If philosophy then takes up the hopeless task of science, and leads us to the theistic conclusion that things had a Maker, because by all signs they had a beginning, philosophy, no matter how confidently theistic at this point, precisely here staggers before the impossibility of imagining why the Maker began to make anything at a given date in dateless eternity. And so theism, just because it tries to be both scientific and philosophical, must confess that what we best know we least know as to the origin of the universe.

His Method

The relations which we think the Maker has in making involve a corresponding view as to preserving, providing, and miracle. We are therefore at the very center of

the battle-field between faith and unbelief. Some limit to the conflict, some definition of the war zone, may perhaps be secured, if we insist that all parties shall distinguish what they may fairly claim to know from what they reasonably infer or only dubiously guess at about these high concerns. It may thus come to light that dreaded attacks on Christianity are but maneuvers of tactical interest, mere parades in due logical pomp and sequence of fierce-looking but harmless speculations, which carry all the modern weapons of precision but fire only blank cartridges.

How dare one hint at such a possibility? Well, partly because after so many battles that threatened to cover the field with the slain the rival troops are still as lively as ever. What they do looks and sounds like real battle. They charge and they retreat; they form new lines and follow new tactics; they boast and grow bloodthirsty; presently they are once more lost in clouds of dust and smoke; by and by a victory is claimed, and may be awarded by some who set up for umpires. But has nothing been settled? Has the world's philosophizing been only a series of mock battles? The old banners and weapons, as well as the old tactics, have mostly been thrown aside, but the old parties are still pitted against each other. Nominalists and realists, empiricists and institutionalists, materialists and idealists, monists and dualists are all still at it, or sleeping on their arms. A mock battle? Surely these stout warriors have been serious enough. And mischief enough has been done, as well as some good; but it has been smaller good and direr mischief only because philosophers have made the same mistake as theologians; they have not carefully enough distinguished between what they know and what they think they know.

If now any indignant philosopher declares that things

have been settled, although they do not stay settled, he is but claiming for his own position the finality which pretty much all the philosophers who went before him claimed for their solutions; and it is no more likely in philosophy than in theology that the last word which we heard is the last we shall hear. For one, I relish the assurance that it is not necessary to stake one's faith on the issue of debates which never end, and give no promise of ending. Under the circumstances this much seems clear: to wit, that one is not bound to disprove the philosophies which threaten faith. It is enough to show that they fall short of proving their case. "I don't know" is good enough defensive armor against foes whose most offensive weapon is a make-believe knowledge. If this defense cuts off superfluous beliefs, it will go hard but it shall also cut off some superfluous objections to belief.

Opinions about the method of creation fall under two classes, monistic and dualistic. Monists hold that there is but one substance, dualists hold to two essentially distinct substances, matter and mind. In our day there are three possible forms of monism: first, that matter is the only substance, and mind but a function of matter; secondly, that mind is the only substance, and matter a function of mind; thirdly, that the only existing substance has both matter and mind as its functions, while neither of these can be identified with the other, nor ever passes over into the other. The first is materialism, the second idealism, the third the doctrine of a two-faced entity, or, called after its most eminent expounder, the doctrine of Spinoza.

Materialism can hardly be regarded as Christian; and so, to accept from materialism all the truth which it affords, while contenting ourselves with a mere denial that we know what is true as to its false positions, would

not be Christian agnosticism. If it admits any relation of God to the universe, it is that he is evolved by the universe, rather than the universe is created by God. Evolution of non-living matter through many stages of organic progress into rational man would carry with it the bare possibility that the worlds are a living organism with the divine mind for its function. But not only is such a doctrine un-Christian, it is incredible to ordinary minds. And the incredibility of materialism to ordinary minds is justified by a conclusion which the most candid of modern physicists accept; namely, that no physical energy is ever known to be, or conceivably can be, converted into an idea, a feeling, or any other state of consciousness. In other words, the objections to materialistic monism are so numerous, so formidable, so persistent, that we are very far indeed from being able to say that we know materialism is true. Surely such a doctrine as this would need to make out its case beyond reasonable doubt before it could ask plain people to accept it.

Idealism may say for itself this at least, that all we know about things is the idea we have of them. That this idea exactly corresponds to the thing is impossible, for the thing presents itself as material, and the idea is immaterial, not a "thing" at all. So far, we have no account of the origin of our ideas. It might be, as Bishop Berkeley suggested, that God directly impresses them on us in every case; or it might be that we are but parts of one universal Self, a world-Self, which knows all truth because it *is* all truth, while we as parts have real knowledge only as we merge the superficial, seeming self into the real self, the one Self. This reduces man and nature to thought-thinking itself and things into existence and out of existence, so far as an individual man's private and peculiar whimwhams are concerned. As clear a reason as I have found for identifying one's self with the

world-Self, and all substance with the world-Idea, is that given by Professor Royce: "If I cannot recall a name, I can recognize it when mentioned, and this proves that already I latently knew it. So of all truth that I ever come to know." Thus it is proved that the true self is the underlying self, and the underlying self is the One Self, the world-Self, the sum at once of reality and knowledge of reality.

According to Berkeley creation is nothing more than the perpetual suggestion to men's minds that things exist; according to Royce there never was any creation, because it is unthinkable. It would be hard to establish to the satisfaction of an average Christian Berkeley's fancy, namely, that God is the Great Deceiver, who incessantly deludes us into believing that things are. An opinion hard to establish not only on God's account, but because we know that things are. Yet how much easier is it to credit with Professor Royce that we men and all things are but parts of a universal Idea, a Whole thinking itself correctly, and parts thinking themselves erroneously? This very philosophy itself might make one feel justified in saying that, so far from knowing the case stands as the ingenious and learned professor tells us, it looks as though the mere part which he is, is greatly mistaken about its own insubstantiality, and further has caught at one of the dreams of philosophic minds as the bottom truth, the One Self, the world-Self, the whole Idea.

Idealism has always been withstood, and always will be withstood by the crass consciousness of us plain folk that we are unideal even in spirit, and our bodies sheerly material. No analysis of the process of sensation and perception is going to dissuade us out of this; nor will any physicist's reduction of matter to motion be able to undo for himself, as he deals with things, the substantiality of the globe we live on, and of its hard

facts. Maybe the physicist knows how empty all seeming is, but he cannot make the rest of us learn this, and we shall hardly take it on trust. That is, if we cannot even imagine matter engaged in thinking, as little can we imagine thought materializing. In other words, neither matter nor mind is all the while within our experience converted into the other, as it would have to be, if the monistic account were a true account of how each all the while produces effects on the other. Neither materialism nor idealism is in the way of getting itself accepted as the known truth about the method of making of the worlds.

The doctrine of a two-faced entity which figures incessantly both as matter and as mind, is the most promising form of monism now before us. It is based on the indisputable law of Continuity, a law so indisputable that to state it seems a truism. For this is that momentous law: what is has been, and will be. That object which we this moment see undergoing a process is but the object which immediately preceded it, unfolded. The persistence of the object is continuity, its unfolding is development, or evolution. Continuity and development between them teach us all that we can know about the natures and the making of all which exists. Matter and mind can by no means whatever be transformed into each other; but there is a way of showing their essential oneness. Volition exhibits the essential nature of both. Volition is a revelation of "dynamic reason." It reveals reason, for it shows thought; it shows reason to be dynamic, for volition controls and directs energy. But matter consists of energy, and volition therefore exhibits at once the essentials of mind and matter. We may call in the aid of the causal process. Causation is not the creation of a new thing, but the transformation of one thing into a modified thing. If matter and mind are incessantly

causing effects in each other this would seem to one monist to prove that they are both identical; that is, when matter produces a mental perception, the energy of which that matter consists is transformed into the mental perception; or, when volition releases a muscle's energy, the volition is transformed into the physical act. Some other monist would hesitate to say it, but he would trace mind and matter both to an origin when they were indistinguishable. Lotze seems to offer aid to both ways of looking at causation. Creation does not occur, never did occur; but what we have taken to be creation is "the Absolute producing the effect upon itself."

As already remarked, it is easy to understand why a physicist should incline to this view of the way in which things are made. He has an invariable experience of continuity in physical things. Whatever takes place in the sphere of his proper studies, the law of continuity assures him that matter is neither increased nor destroyed; however changed in form, it continues unchanged in quantity. This phase of the law of continuity supplies the familiar law of the indestructibility of matter. But he is also fully persuaded that whatever changes are produced by energy, or force, the quantity of force or energy is continuous. The law of continuity is again the ground of his conviction. This application of the law is the law which was the most signal of the early triumphs of modern science, the law of the conservation of force, or convertibility of energy. Physical causation, then, within the physicist's uniform experience is a process of conversion. Energy takes new forms, and in so doing gives matter new forms. When the physicist turns aside to note the effects of matter on mind, of mind on matter, how could he help taking it for granted that here are further illustrations of continuity? He supposed that every motion which the will causes in the body, or the body causes in the

mind, is but the causing motion passing over into the motion caused.

But all thorough-going efforts to demonstrate this conclusion have failed. The law of convertibility does not here apply. As a consequence we do not know how to account for the effects either of mind on matter or of matter on mind. How then can we carry the physicist's erroneous inference back to the Maker's method? The Maker is not a fountain of energy. Matter does not stream forth from him. He may *make* energy and matter but he does not *consist of* it, nor is he drawn on for it. Even if matter consists of energy, this negative conclusion remains unshaken. As we do not know how mind and matter manage to affect each the other, and all efforts of physiological psychology show how much we can be taught, how little in the end we can know about this matter, so a confession of necessary ignorance as to the ways of the Maker is the part of wisdom, even when the accommodating doctrine of a two-faced entity offers itself as an exposition of the unknowable. If it is true that ink and milk can be drawn from the same tank, it sorely needs explanation why they have so little in common, and are so very unlike.

If it is necessary to say of monistic doctrines about the Maker's method that we cannot know them to be true, what can be said of dualistic explanations? Dualism, by teaching that mind is intrinsically different from matter, relieves the problem of one unmanageable element. It does not have to undertake any explanation of how these have come to be so different. Yet it finds enough of difficulty left to contend with.

A greatly relished theory on the part of some dualists is that mind and matter are coeternal; that is, both God and things are self-existent. This is an opinion which occasionally springs up when believers in God

begin to be impressed by the very proper refusal of the physicist to discuss the creation of matter, as something entirely outside his province. He finds matter existing; his concern is to find out how it exists, not how it came into existence. But the doctrine of the eternity of matter is the poorest possible accommodation between science and religion. It wholly disregards the exact harmony between the laws of matter and of mind. This harmony is utterly unaccountable if we claim for matter eternal preexistence independent of eternal Mind.

It really sets up matter as, in effect, an absurd sort of deity, a senseless idol endowed with the truly divine attribute of self-existence. Now, if any point in theism is settled for enlightened minds, it is that they can acknowledge but one God. They may turn atheists and reject all gods; but the dualism which erects matter into an eternal Thing, forever beside the Almighty but independent of him, is too incongruous with other theistic ideas for a place among them. It is, in fact, the most revolting of all theories about the making of the worlds, for those who believe that they were made at all, and so to theism is far from winning recognition as known truth.

To physical science also it is in some respects the least tenable, if the physicist will be strict with himself, of all theories concerning God's relation to the universe. When it is admitted that God has had or has a hand in shaping things, the doctrine of the independent eternity of matter teaches that at some moment in eternity God began to turn chaos into cosmos. Now there is no longer any one to deny that non-living things at least have been brought to their present state by a purely natural development. But such a development excludes the supposition that it was begun by an impulse which the Maker imparted to previously inert matter, because it is confessedly due to energies resident in matter itself. That these very

energies were imparted by the Maker faces a still more searching objection; namely, that the state of things which preceded the communication of energy, the supposed state of chaos, was one in which there was no motion, no energies, and no laws. But without these, matter would have no properties, nothing could be said of it which would be true of it. To be without properties is to be non-existent. Chaos is an impossible state of things.

If matter, then, is not eternal, the only alternative for the dualist is that the world was absolutely created. By absolute creation is meant that the Maker brought all things into existence, and not out of preexistent materials. This is commonly but infelicitously called "creation out of nothing," as though "nothing" were a sort of material from which things were made.

Absolute creation is generally conceded to be the teaching of the Bible. It cannot be shown that the language of Genesis is decisively in its favor; but this is the almost uniform interpretation of the ancient record. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and void"; this does not expressly say that nothing but God existed before the first creative act, and that the result of this act was a kind of chaos; but the words quoted have naturally enough been so understood. It would seem that Paul refers to this statement when he commends Abraham for believing that God could deal with "things that are not as though they were" (Rom. 4 : 17). If Paul did not mean to ascribe to Abraham belief in "creation out of nothing," and to explain in this way his faith that God could give to him a son in his old age, I do not see what else the words of Paul can naturally mean. And, of course, here, whether we have a correct interpretation of Genesis by the apostle or not, we clearly have Paul's own

doctrine about creation. To the same effect would seem to be the singular expression with which the Epistle to the Hebrews begins its illustration of what faith can grasp. "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen has not arisen out of things which appear" (11 : 3). All that this declares is that Hebrews did not believe God used visible materials in making visible things. Did they then hold that he used invisible materials? That was certainly not the common faith. The only alternative is that this passage commends the faith which could "understand" that God made the worlds "out of nothing." It is a fair conclusion that the Scriptures put forward, and make themselves responsible for this view, as they have always been understood to do.

But could any view be more bewildering? It must be confessed that the method of such a creating, an absolute creating, is less imaginable than of any other. We may be shut up to belief in absolute creation, indeed, seem to be so, if we are to hold to any account of how the Maker made the worlds; but, if so, how could we exhibit a more glaring illustration of our ignorance as to what we may not improperly claim to know?

It is true that a small abatement of the difficulty can be found by showing that it corresponds to a similar difficulty within our familiar experience. Our wills control the voluntary muscles; but how? We cannot make the smallest approach as to knowing how. It would be the natural supposition that the will puts forth sufficient releasing energy of its own to pull the trigger, which releases the hammer, which strikes the fulminating cap charged with the nervous energy in the brain, which explodes the muscular energy in the arm, which shoots out a fist after a fashion that the man hit can acknowledge. But this natural supposition is baseless. There is every

reason to deny that energy resides in the will, or is ever given forth by the mind. So far as we can see, continuity is interrupted precisely where mind and body cause changes in each other. The mystery is as complete as though the will actually created a releasing energy "out of nothing." Such a mystery in our continuous experience does not in the slightest measure resolve for us the mystery of the Maker's method, if he creates "out of nothing"; but it may very well aid us to put up with an ultimate mystery in him. Why, we need not hesitate to say that we absolutely create our volitions. The utmost that can be done in preparation for them is to supply conditions which give the volition form. But when it is formed, we ourselves form it. It is entirely our own. We create it. That is to say, that we absolutely initiate the process when we require our bodies to act.

Let us then suppose that matter consists of energy. It is not so hard to believe that God puts forth the energy which matter consists of. To be sure, in denying that he is a fountain of energy, that energy—that is, matter—streams forth from him as though he were made of energy—that is of matter—in denying this dynamico-materialistic opinion about the nature of God, we have left unsolved the problem of the Maker's method. What he does is to create absolutely, so far as we can see. But the impenetrable mystery of it all is endurable, because it is just like the equally impenetrable mystery of a breach of continuity in the causal process between our own minds and our own bodies.

I must add that I do not advocate the doctrine of the constitution of matter which resolves it into centers of force. It seems to be a gravely defective theory. The latest advance in physics is quite clear of it. But this theory is here adduced as showing how dense is our

ignorance about the method of creation, when the utmost knowledge about it assumes more than can be known.

2. The Preserver

If the universe had to be made, naturally it might have to be kept. No other Keeper could be so suitable as the Maker would be. In truth, to accept any being as Maker would be to look to him as Preserver. The instinctiveness with which we feel without analyzing it, the relation of the Maker to the Keeper is the reason which Paul gives for affirming that in God "we live, and move, and have our being," a reason poetically expressed, yet accurate: "For we are also his offspring" (Acts 17 : 28). It is conceivable that in the making the Maker provided for the keeping. Science could raise no objection. But it is a deistic exposition of the matter, and has hardly a friend in our day. The considerations which weigh against this theory are negative, but they go to the very root of modern theism. If indications of a personal God are found in the constitution of the universe, they are the spiritual, at least the immaterial, nature of energy, the universality of law, and the outcome of good. But so intricate do we find the involutions of natural law, so inextricably detailed the actual provision for benefits, in more technical terms, so complex is the teleological aspect of the cosmos, and so bound up with the operation of non-material force, that it is far easier to regard all this as under the constant direction of the Maker than as originally provided for in the infinitessimal details of a practically infinite universe. The foresight which the deistic scheme involves is, to say the least, hardly less incomprehensible than a beneficent control of all things by sheer chance. The least we can conclude about this theory of conservation is that it is repellant even to the point of grotesqueness. Carlyle well

expressed the modern feeling when he described deism as making God "an absentee Deity, sitting idle ever since the first Sabbath outside the universe and seeing it go." If we may claim to know anything about the Maker and his work, we may insist that the explanation of conservation does not lie exclusively in prearrangement, in winding up the clock, and letting it run. We cannot know that deism is true, and we abhor such an isolation of God.

At the opposite extreme is that doctrine of the immanence of God in the world, or immanence of the world in God, which identifies all activity with his activity, and goes by the name of Christian monism. Monism, when worked out as a theory of conservation, is a doctrine of continuous creation. God alone *is,* except as his energy takes the form of creatures. They continue to exist because that energy continues; but they *consist* of energy which God continually puts forth, therefore they are continually created. For we must bear in mind that this theory is prized because it makes things continue just as they began, in the activity of God. The satisfaction which some minds take in this revived doctrine of the Schoolmen was exhibited a few years ago by a book which the Rev. Myron Adams put forth under the frank title of "The Continuous Creation," and which told what Christianity looked like from this point of view. Its looks, as I recall them, were more interesting than Christian.

We have seen that making and keeping the worlds are inseparable relations. I do not here repeat the considerations which forbid one to say that monism solves the mystery of creation; but it ought not to pass without mention that, when monism is found to involve belief in *continuous* creation, it thus incurs another and grave objection; it subverts the causal judgment. This all-

knowing theory undermines all knowledge. According to the causal judgment every event has a cause; but according to monism, as Doctor Strong has candidly stated, there are no second causes. God does all, and does all immediately. What we take to be causes cannot be so, for they are incessantly going out of existence, and incessantly replaced. How could they do anything? They do not last long enough. Of course, the advocates of this theory may not mean just this. They mean that things are kept by incessant act of the same kind which made them. But their theory involves what they may not mean, and a theory which undertakes to explain must be held to mean all that it involves. The theory is that the creative act is ever renewed, and its renewal is the new creation of all that it upholds. It is not that so much energy is added to energy already existing in the world, nor that so many new things are being created besides those which already constituted the world. God is furnishing new energy to take the place of energy already expended, and this energy constitutes new things to take the place of things already extinct. This is what continuous creation amounts to. What we take to be effects are not, then, effects of what we take to be causes. An effect is always a cause modified; but these are effects of God's undiscerned activity. All is illusion. I imagine my body to be the very same, with a slight physiological change, that it was a moment ago. I fancy it to be the scene of effects which figure as hunger or satiety, good health or bad, youthfulness or senility. And these effects I fancy to be of the body's own making. If not, then nothing is caused. But I am mistaken. It is not at all the same body as a moment ago. Nor is its animating spirit the same spirit. Every moment body and spirit are newly created. As nothing except God has substance, so nothing except God has continuity. Souls

and bodies have only seeming continuity. Hume said that we cannot *prove* our personal identity; continuous creation *disproves* personal identity.

How is it possible to find in this denial of what we all take to be causation a penetrating and wide-open account of the way in which the Keeper keeps the worlds? How accept this reversal of all that we think we know best as very knowledge of what we admit that we know least? Of course, other and formidable difficulties, psychological and ethical, are encountered, if we assent to the part which monism tells us that the Maker enacts in erecting human personalities into a manifestation of himself as a rational Being. We are well used to thinking of ourselves as just ourselves, and free, and sinful. But why be troubled over the stupendous difficulties in the way of accepting monism, which are hinted at in the merest reference to it as a doctrine of human personality and responsibility? Until the scientific objection, the objection at the threshold, the difficulty of converting the physical and the psychical into each other, and also the kindred metaphysical difficulty as to causation are disposed of, it hardly seems worth while to take up other and more interior considerations pro and con.

Since Hegel no philosopher has been looked to with so devout trust as Lotze. "The secret of Hegel," after all, was in his logical process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis; all being, all history, all truth were thus to be brought to pass, interpreted, and even predicted with the irrefutable certainty of dialectics. By Lotze everything is explained as not merely caused by but consisting in divine efficiency. Hegelianism did not long hold its supreme place in the land of its birth; and the doctrine of Lotze, which we are most familiar with as theistic monism, although it finds a certain currency with high thinkers in England and America, is not in point

of fact certifying knowledge, but establishing agnosticism. Such a philosophy as that of Lotze, or of Hegel, must explain all or nothing. It means as much for everything as for anything. But it is not omniscience, and must therefore be a mistake.

Where, then, are we left in our endeavor to find out what may be known as to the conservation of the worlds? If we may not with the deist take one extreme, and explain that God at the outset fitted up the worlds to run themselves, nor at the opposite extreme hold with the monist that all substance and all energy are divine, may we choose a position midway? May we regard the substance of things and the energy in them as their own, but as kept in existence by the Maker of both? This is what most people would mean by the preservation of the universe. To their minds such a view would not be so much a theory how the work is done, but the bare fact that it is done. It would seem to be the conception of Paul too, when he told the Athenians that "we live, and move, and have our being" in God. Although this passage is a particular favorite with those who maintain, virtually, that immanence is identification, it is not easy to see how Paul could have used so few words to make it any plainer that the worlds are not of God's substance, but are God's work. We live in him only because our life is not his life, but supported by his life; we move in him only because he is the sphere and we the objects of that motion; we have our being in him only because our being is not his, but sustained by his. This discreteness is not obscured by Paul even as between Christians and Christ. "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2 : 10). To create us is to cause the new man to exist. To create us unto good works is to provide that our good works shall exist. To create us in Christ Jesus unto good works

is to make sure of the good works by making Christ the sphere of the new life. To be created is not to be an efflux. To be created in Christ Jesus is not to be of the same essence as Christ Jesus. To be created unto good works leaves the works dependent on us and distinct from us; and so we are dependent and distinct as to him whose workmanship we are. The same distinctness with dependence appears in the Master's word, "Abide in me, and I in you" (John 15 : 4). If any one could mistake this for deistic independence, what could he not so mistake? Or if any one could fly to another extreme and take it for monistic identification, the next words should cure that error: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, no more can ye except ye abide in me." Ye and me; possibly apart from me, ye dwelling in me, and I dwelling in you. This is immanence as well assured as any monist would have, with distinctness as entire as any dualist conceives it. If it teaches aught, it teaches that union in Christ maintains us in fruitfulness, as Paul taught the Ephesians that we are wrought upon in order ourselves to work, and argued to the Athenians, comprehensively, that we exist, act, live, because our support is where our source is, not in "art or man's device," but in him whose offspring we are. I know not by what effort this natural meaning could be forced into discreteness without support, or support by a virtual identification. The old theory of concursus, as it is often called, the theory that God maintains and co-operates with the things and the forces which he has made, seems to be the New Testament's view, as it certainly is the popular view of divine conservation.

Nevertheless, concursus cannot be understood. The very utmost to be said is that God keeps the worlds, but how he does it is beyond comprehension. Our blindness is congenital and incurable. We can never

see into the fact which underlies all present need that creatures have for God, the fact that their very existence depends on him. But the perplexity only begins with ignorance as to how things are kept from lapsing into nothingness. As modern knowledge views the case divine support seems quite superfluous; and if not superfluous, it is incredible. Here we find that key to scientific problems, namely, physicist's conception of law, stuck fast in the lock.

So far as the idea of law can show, mere existence is self-existence. The indestructibility of matter has become axiomatic for physics. It illustrates the law of continuity. There seems no chance for bringing it into question, therefore no chance for making the dependence of things on God in any wise credible to science. Jevons, to be sure, in his "Principles of Science" demurs that we ought not to take the imperishability of matter for granted; because there may be some law unknown to us under which it could go out of existence. But this conjecture will not bear examination. In the first place, a law is not a force, but the way a force acts. Jevons, then, merely says in effect, we must not take for granted that matter is indestructible, because there may be some way to destroy it. If this is not to beg the question against an accepted truth, at least, in the next place, it raises the question whether there can be any such way. A law is an order of facts which inheres in the natures of the facts. The law of an object belongs to its qualities, is the fact of quality. Every law is the law of an object as existing, not as going out of existence; it is a quality which is, not which is ceasing to be. If a quality is ceasing to be, the law is ceasing to be. If the qualities were going out of existence, the law under which an object could go out of existence would itself terminate. That is to say, the way in which an object

could cease to be, would cease to be a way for ceasing to be. The possibility would be equally an impossibility. The possibility of going out of existence would be a continuous provision in an object both for being and not being what it is. I take it that reason must first affirm and deny its own existence before accepting such a non-sense as sense. Whatever exists may continue to exist. It could not cease to be. We may certainly reverse the ancient maxim that no thing can be made out of nothing, and say also that no thing can be unmade into nothing.

But this is a predicament for our doctrine. We are not at liberty to affirm for things a divine support which they do not need. The law of parsimony forbids this. Therefore I do not see how we can stop short of admitting to the deist that the everyday and simple doctrine of divine support for things and spirits is inexplicable. Yet this backward look toward deism is forbidden to us, like a backward look by Lot's family toward abandoned and abominable Sodom. If we feel, and are justified in feeling that the worlds, that we ourselves above all worlds depend on God, need God, that we may have vital not arbitrary, natural not artificial relations with him, this cannot be because we understand the whole case. We can "know in part," and that is all. The actuality of our dependence on God would make religion reasonable, and the feeling of dependence is the best assured factor in religion. It is indispensable to spirituality, to piety; but this it is as to which the devout theist must confess that he knows least. The late Dr. Charles Hodge, who was by no means wanting in courage for fundamental truth, became satisfied that, as touching the support of the universe by its Creator, we ought to pretend to no theory whatever. Such an agnosticism is as truly Christian as was its devout and

learned advocate. Yet much more important to the Christian's feeling than the making and keeping of the universe is the intimate relation of God in ruling. Are we confronted here also by insoluble problems?

3. The Ruler

The ruling of the worlds provides for providence and prayer, for miracle and even inspiration. Belief in these is particularly repugnant to the skeptic. To make and uphold the worlds looks at the matter chiefly in the large; to rule the worlds looks at it quite as much in the little. The skeptic might complacently recognize a divine idea in the universe as a whole, but refuse to entertain the thought of divine intervention in detail. He could perhaps find nothing available to say against the embodiment of reason in the constitution of all things, but every several incident could be scrutinized, every particular object analyzed, and in the end it would be easy to announce that he had found God nowhere. It is certain that neither the anatomist, nor the chemist, nor the electrician has instruments adapted to detect any besides physical objects and agents.

But we have not here to do with the skeptic. Christians are taking counsel together. Faith, not doubt, is our concern. What is the length of its tether, if indeed it may creep beyond knowledge? To confess the bounds of knowledge, to betray the difficulties of faith may even seem pusillanimous. It is as though one would curry favor with unbelievers, instead of showing loyalty to Christ and his people. In fact, too many give the impression that they are doing this very thing. But to what profit? Maybe they seek to gain favor for their asseverations by the candor of their concessions. With what success let those say who have made the experiment, or watched it. We here concern ourselves not to

convert the incredulous to our view, but to make sure that our view is right. The truth, and nothing but the truth, even if not the whole truth, is the affair of these pages. It is peculiarly Old Testament truth which is concerned with the rulership of God.

(1) Providence and Prayer

Precisely what have we now to inquire into? How much ground is covered by the providence of God and by prayer to God? Not a few try to make the doctrine easy of belief by limiting it. It is certain that people in general keep the divine providence far within the limits set for it in the Bible. In point of fact, the Bible sets no limits to providence. It covers the whole creation, and every minutest part. But one may often hear people say, "It seemed like a providence," or still more cautiously, "It almost seemed as though providence was on our side." Certainly providence is always for or against us, if we may believe what Scripture teaches, and what the very idea of providence means to a theist.

In making the worlds God has objects in view. For these objects he provided, and provides. He had purposes, and arranges to accomplish them. So to provide is providence. These purposes and objects embrace the well-being of creatures. Why should he make and place his creatures in a world maintained by himself unless to provide for them? "For thus saith Jehovah that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited" (Isa. 45 : 18). Why make man except for the good of man? Let the objects of God be directly in himself, why not indirectly in his children? If he is so exalted that he could not fitly adopt as supreme a purpose outside himself, does that purpose need adapting in order to cover human needs?

If God could not, as is most likely, find another aim so high, so worthy, as what has been called his glory, how could his glory exist apart from his works? If we see that his aims, whatever they are, must be all-inclusive, how could such aims exclude any good? If we are ourselves his doing, how could he provide for our undoing? Again let us ask, why make man except for man's weal? If a man will not have it so, he should not be astounded to find the providence of God against him. He would have occasion for surprise only in case God left him out of account. This is the obvious teaching of theism, and also the express doctrine of the Bible. The scriptural ground for it is familiar; we need give it only a passing glance.

The dominant but not exclusive doctrine of the Old Testament is that God provides for man rather than men, or oftener still for the people Israel rather than for individual Hebrews. But this is not the sole lesson of the elder Scriptures, particularly of the earliest times. Patriarchs, judges, and some of the kings were special objects of God's care. He was confidently spoken of as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as though this made him to all the tribes of Israel the proper object forever, not merely of worship but particularly of trust. Again and again the Psalms tell us that God cared for the house of David. In Abraham were all the nations of the earth to be blessed; to the root of Jesse should the Gentiles seek. The dominant but not the exclusive doctrine of the New Testament is that the providence of God is for men rather than for man, for his children rather than for his church. Multitudinism characterizes the Old Testament, individualism the New. The former cares for each and all only because Israel, or perhaps mankind, is cared for; the latter secures the interests of the church and mankind by providing for each and every

man. When the whole scheme of divine government is surveyed from the heights of the New Age, we are assured, indeed, that "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew" (Rom. 11 : 2), "but we see Jesus . . . made a little lower than the angels, . . crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2 : 9). The providence of God, then, is busied for the race of man, and for every individual of that race, for the great ends recorded by history, and for the least ends that affect private lives. We are familiarly assured, yet with difficulty keep in mind, that the very hairs of our heads are numbered, and that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father. Spiritual concerns and secular concerns both are our concerns, and his who provides for us. The widest and the most detailed oversight is to be ascribed to the Divine Ruler, and called by the august and loving name of his providence.

Prayer is petition. In strictness this is all. While we associate with our requests adoration, gratitude, and confession, it is only by accommodation that these are termed prayer. And even if it were possible in strictness of speech to call by the name of prayer all pious utterances which are addressed to God, we are now concerned solely with the use of prayer to secure benefits. Those benefits may be of every kind. No one who believes in prayer will question that we may ask for spiritual good, but some doubt whether secular good can fitly be included. No limit is set in the model prayer. Its comprehensiveness is a large part of its propriety. Paul encouraged the Philippians in everything to supplicate and make their requests known unto God. It was to be by this complete unloading of their desires that "the peace of God which passeth all understanding would keep their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil.

4 : 6, 7). It is possible that only a few have so intimate and loving trust in God as to tell him about their business ventures, and ask from him the success of their political schemes, but Paul did not hesitate to bid Roman Christians "strive together with him in prayers to God for him that he might be delivered from them that did not believe in Judea," also that his "service for Jerusalem might be accepted of the saints," and that he might go with joy to the Romans and with them "be refreshed" (15 : 30-32). Public and private ends here mingle with the most sacred, something like politics with something like business, with charities at any rate, and with brotherly longing for social refreshing. We may ask for whatever we can innocently desire.

Let us not now make the difficulties of this subject greater than they are. Prayer asks for the intervention of providence. Whatever, then, the difficulties of providence, prayer adds that of seeking to bend the divine will to the wishes of men. Of course their wishes are important as touching spiritual good. Such good cannot become ours undesired, hardly ours unasked for. It is itself an active relation to our heavenly Father, and to feel no longings toward him, to have no word for his ear, may admit every virtue except the highest, but of itself cuts off fellowship with God. A mere reflex influence of prayer would supply such a benefit as this, and neglect of prayer would as surely exclude it. But whether God will turn aside from his ways with the world and change them to accommodate men's wishes, this is quite another question.

As to his rule over physical objects is it, then, enough to believe that he "makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust"? What if he does more than that for the good? Professor Tyndall long ago notified us how far-

reaching a change in the course of nature would be required by a rainfall in answer to prayer. But it is a point as to which the difficulties may easily be exaggerated. Would the affairs of the world be brought to a stand and the order of nature convulsed, if the rain-makers should succeed in bringing down showers by exploding their bombs, or by effecting great discharges of electricity in the upper air? Whether such doings brought rain or not, they would produce a state of things which nature could not bring to pass without extensive changes begun ages ago, begun, indeed, at the beginning of the earth's history, such changes as Professor Tyndall told of. What then? Men can do so whenever they take the trouble; has God no way of affecting the course of natural events, and, let us say, of granting rain in answer to prayer? Can he not cause the earth to tremble, may he not touch the mountains and make them smoke, or cast out his lightnings, and pour forth his floods? It is not the question whether he can work a miracle. This question we have yet to face. The question is only this, may he not possibly have reserved for himself an opportunity of reaching unobserved the mechanism of nature, and so of producing results in which nothing but natural force shall have a recognized part? What man does he must do subject to observation; must God have a witness for everything that he would undertake, if one please, in response to human prayer? We do not need to revert to what is called "the carpenter theory of creation," that God put things together instead of letting them grow; but the issue may be fairly set and calmly faced, whether it is unreasonable to believe that God may do this or that which would not of itself come about, and do it merely because some one has asked him to. Is there no such thing on his part as paternal indulgence? Is it quite

incredible, even impossible, that favors should be granted because they are wished for? Is such a course so suitable between man and man, and so preposterous between God and man? We count it simple courtesy, bare politeness, so to say, on our part; does the greatness of God require aloofness and indifference on his part? Or does sacred Nature let us in, and keep him out? May it risk our touch, but not his? I am not stating that God ever interposes, it may be best that he should not; but I am asking that the difficulties be not overdone. I am urging that it is quite unnecessary to fall back on the unlovely, deistic view of God, deistic in excluding every special act of God, even though all that occurs is traced directly to his activity. Why hold that he cannot grant us some purely physical gift, if only he will? It is easy to believe that there are favors which may be harmlessly conferred either by man or God on those that ask for them, conferred only when they are asked, and only because the giver likes to give them when properly asked for them.

We must here note that the prayer which we are considering calls on providence, does not ask for miracles. The distinction is momentous. In miracles the hand of God must always appear, in providences never. Miracles may, it is true, employ the forces of nature; providence, so far as our eye can discern, must employ no other. It would be unreasonable to say that God works miracles in answer to prayer; there is no proof that he does; but if one believes that divine providence is extended to those who rely on it and ask for it, what is unreasonable in such a supposition? We are unable, it is true, to say that we know such and such events are due to divine interposition or prearrangement for our sakes, but we can know that our faith is invited by God, and that faith in him is never absurd. Hope might be too sanguine, trust can never be too strong.

Taking care not to represent to ourselves or to others the difficulties in providence or prayer as graver than they are and must be, let us begin with the last term of the problem and work back into the first. Does any saint of God, whose mind is in the sweetest and fullest communion with his Father's, know why God does not answer all sincere prayers for spiritual good? Who can tell why the prevailing Spirit does not win to a good life the child of pious parents that unweariedly "besiege the throne of grace" for their wayward son, their reckless daughter? Is intercessory prayer worthless? May we not reasonably ask one who has the ear of God to pray for us? Must, then, the responsibility rest with those who intercede in vain? Have they lacked sincerity? Have those anxious parents intermitted now and then the agony of their "strivings in prayer"? Or has hope failed them, and does God resent it that they still trust him even though they do not look for the priceless blessings which they continue to seek? Is it required that one be hopeful as well as trustful? May not faith be clinging all the closer when hope ceases? If the prayers of parents fail, is it perhaps because the father has a fault, and the child knows it, or the mother been less than saintly, and the defect been seen? Or is it utterly beyond human ken why God has not granted in this particular case what it would seem that he must grant what, one would say, he sent his Son to provide for?

Then turn to petitions for one's own spiritual uplift. Why are these so often unanswered? Make all necessary allowance for the virtual revoking of a prayer by loss of interest in what it asked for, does it not remain that the very thing asked for was that the heart might not grow thus indifferent? Let us give all the credit possible to the series of steps which the Keswick brethren recom-

mend, and all but insist upon; let us say everything for them except that the Bible requires and experience enforces them; is not in effect the thing asked for that one may be able to take these very steps, and to walk always in these pious ways? Or do we need no special aid, as we had thought we do? Not even need to pray? May we take with no more asking? This has been recommended; and it may be done when the gift is wholly God's act, like forgiveness.

Is it thus ours to be strong, and is it bare neglect on our part if we are not? But as to the help that the weak require, and that every one would say they require? It is the hour of dire extremity, where is the promised Spirit? We have called on him, why does he not come? Where the fellowship of Christ with hearts desolate because they cannot find him? Where the power against temptation that we ask for, and that his own conquests have won for his tempted people? Are we to beg in vain for help against habitual sins? Must the drunkard who calls on God conclude that there is no ear to hear his despairing outcry? Or must he maintain the state of mind we call trust? Is confidence then so safe? Or have those who succumb to less infamous sins, who are irritable, perhaps cruel in their irritability, have these who hate themselves afterward more than they ever hate any one else, no help to look for? Is the love of God never to be shed abroad in their hearts and to stir up brotherly love? Is selfishness our doom all our lives long? Must we be self-recollecting in our most eager efforts for others, and plume ourselves on the elevation of our most heavenly minded prayers? Or shall we be obliged to say that only in the end will "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" make us "free from the law of sin and death"? Or yet again, shall we have to accept as true

for us what Paul said of unfaithful Israel, "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all"? (Rom. 11 : 32). And is it only his forgiving mercy that we are to illustrate clean to the end? Would he perhaps keep us humble by keeping us weak? Have we virtually to fall back on the secret decrees of God, and say that, although his children may with all their hearts, at any rate in all sincerity, appeal to him for release from the sins which he hates in them, and for attainment of the graces which he loves, still he has reserved something in his counsels about us which he has not revealed to us, and that he does not because he will not make us here and now the saints we would like to be, and ask to become? If any one knows the relations of prayer for spiritual benefits to withhold answers, or adequately to the common understanding can explain the success of other people's petitions, and has ever told the explanation, will he tell it again? So many are guessing at a solution, and are so heavy-hearted because they can find no certain one, that agnosticism at this point seems impregnable, and I think too that it is Christian. One who finds no mystery here, does not know God's ways, does not know his fellow-men, perhaps does not know himself.

One point ought not to be overlooked as part of the relation between our agnosticism and our knowledge. If one thinks he must refer the mystery of unanswered prayer for spiritual good back to the fathomless counsels of God, if one surmises that God is reluctant to give the best gifts to some who earnestly covet them, if one understands Paul to teach that there are vessels of wrath purposely fitted for destruction (Rom. 9 : 22), let such an one notice too how eager Paul is to deny that any have "stumbled in order that they may fall" (Rom. 11 : 14); let him observe that with Paul predestination is pre-

destination to be conformed to the image of God's Son (Rom. 8 : 29), and that neither Paul nor Isaiah, nor any other biblical writer ever makes God say, "Seek ye me in vain." If any fail to attain to righteousness, it is not in spite of their prayers, not because they had a vain confidence in God, but because they lacked confidence in him, and sought not by faith. "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (Rom. 9 : 30-33). Whatever doubt and darkness thickly curtain this aspect of the doctrine of prayer, we know that in all cases there must be a blessing for "them that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." How or why filled thus and then, we cannot foresee, perhaps can never know.

As to prayer for earthly good we have already noticed, by way of avoiding needless perplexities, that it is not out of the power of God to grant these prayers without miracle, without disturbing the good order of his works; also that God might be indulgent, that to exercise good will might be pleasant as well as possible to him. We may now add that, as regards our graver earthly interests, there are intimations in the nature of the case and in the Scriptures that God would be disposed to grant our prayers; the unanswerable question is whether he ever does it. The scheme of nature is not so admirable that it would be a shame to interfere. No scheme of finite objects could presumably be made to fit all wants. If we accept the doctrine of natural selection by survival of the fittest, any gains are at enormous cost. If we study the "short and simple annals of the poor," the problem may grow appalling in darkness and in the demand for a solution. Nature is not so benignant that men have no need to fight with all their might to disarm her and make her serve. They must also help one another. So only do we rise at all,

Does the nature of the case suggest that we can get on without God's assistance? Does he fling us into the water, like roughly used little boys, to swim or drown? If one's business threatens a failure, or reaches it, there are sometimes good friends to lend a hand; is it vain to look to the best Friend? Life's burdens are heavy; every man must bear his own load; can no strength be got for the asking? Our problems are sometimes a predicament; if we lack wisdom, may we not ask of God? Does he not give liberally? And will he not do it without upbraiding? James tells us that we may "ask in faith, nothing wavering" (1 : 6). Peter nobly bids us "humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, . . casting all our care upon him, for he careth for us" (1 Peter 5 : 6, 7). Trials never strain us so, sorrows never grow so sore, as to bring into question the assurance left for the consolation of all ages by the saddest document in literature: "Though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men" (Lam. 3 : 32, 33).

But will he save us the grief? Does he ever do so just because we implore him to? I know no way of finding out. The Bible does not afford an explicit answer to this question. Nor does experience. A much-quoted passage is that in which James illustrates his doctrine that "the strenuous (ἐνεργουμένη) prayer of a righteous man availeth much." It is the case of those who are in illness, and perhaps in guilt. "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." These directions seem

at once made a good deal more general, not being confined to the personages or the procedure just prescribed: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed" (James 5 : 14-16). I do not see how any can find the promised cures less than miraculous. It is urged that anointing with oil was resort to a medicament, and that no more was meant than to ask the blessing of God on medical measures. But oil is not a panacea, nor laying of hands a cure-all. Means so inadequate to the promised end make the hand of God apparent, and works evidently of God's hand are miracles by definition. It does not follow that some cures might not be effected by the expectation of cure; mind-cures are common enough, but they are not "divine healing," and they are limited in kind, while to the promise given by James no limit is set. The more general direction, "Confess and pray," does not promise healing, although it leads to hope of it, without placing such healings in a class by themselves. How little the writer objected to regarding the cure as miraculous is evident from the reference to Elijah's prayers, one of which secured a drought of three and a half years, while the other caused the heaven to give rain and the earth to yield her fruit (ver. 17, 18). It must also not be overlooked that to the anointing, the imposition of hands, and the prayers of the presbytery are promised not only the cure of disease, but also the forgiveness of sins. The whole case is unique. The promise is too wide, its wideness too rigid, to let us narrow it into a promise of the non-miraculous intervention of divine providence.

Let no one say that God is unconcerned. Let no one conclude that he does not give relief in sickness. It is not true that our strong outcry smites upon a dull ear. It is not clear that God would like to help, and could help, but must not. God is ruler. "Jehovah is good to

all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." But we simply do not know what he is doing now. We do not know whether what he now does in our temporal interest is affected by our asking. We know him so well and his doings so little that here also what we know most we know least. But it remains that, when we cast all our cares upon him, we cannot help feeling that it is worth while to do so. There are not many who believe in the existence of a God, and in their extremity altogether withhold this tribute of dependence upon his overruling.

But we thus reach a still more radical question: How does God rule? If we do not know what comes of prayer, do we know that anything is wrought just for us either with or without prayer? The providence of God is in question to many minds because they can think of no method by which God may regulate the course of events. Just as naturally those who believe in providence have felt bound to show how it works. Every possible method has been imagined by one, and rejected by another. I think we must say of all that they do not fit the needs of the case. If with the deist we hold that everything necessary was provided for in advance, this prevents the Maker from touching his works, and debars him from answering prayer for either physical or spiritual aid. Every visit of the Holy Spirit is a fresh interposition; to exclude him is not providence.

An opposite doctrine is that the spirits of men are a free field for the Spirit of God, and that by influencing human minds God may to a large extent control earthly events. It is, indeed, congenial to the genius of Christianity to hold that the Holy Spirit controls the minds of men; but recent study has shown so intimate a bond between mind and body, that even personality is regarded as the sum of physical conditions, and a possibility of guiding the mind except by controlling the body would be utterly

denied. It may even be suggested that to interfere with the movements of the mind would be a departure from its laws which implied irrationality. Rationality is made sure when the Holy Spirit influences the mind by impressing the truth, by conferring insight into ideas already known and suitable to the occasion. Yet even this much is inexplicable. How does the Spirit give insight? But the risk of irrationality, when the Spirit is believed to interfere with normal processes of the mind may be illustrated by the common enough fanaticism which ascribes to the Spirit "impressions," impulsions, and vagrant notions for which no other account of their singular character is so welcome.

There are two other and contrasted theories of providence. The one regards every event as the direct act of God, and law as God's habit of acting. The other admits that nature has forces and laws of her own, but holds that the forces are maintained and directed by the Ruler, while laws are merely ordinances of the sheer will of God, and any breach of them quite free to his choice. The former is the theory of continuous creation, the latter the theory of concursus. The theory of continuous creation is open to all the objections which we found to it as a theory of conservation, with this in addition as a theory of providence that, if God has fixed habits of acting, his methods are rigid as discarded deism says there are, and afford no place for answers to prayer. As to the converse theory, that of concursus, unobjectionable though it might appear as a way of accounting for the mere support of things and forces, an insurmountable difficulty is met with in explaining providence by it. We must bear in mind that providence contemplates not only great events but small, covers not only outcomes but processes. A true account of providence must tell us how God incessantly directs the forces of

nature toward his purposed ends; while the doctrine of concursus alleges so detailed interference as would put nature and her ways quite out of sight. Continuous creation makes every divine act nature's act; concursus makes what would be every act of nature a divine act. Concursus begins with providing for nature's support, and ends with leaving nature nothing to do. According to the first theory, every event although divine is natural; according to the second, every event is so divine as to be artificial.

The historical argument for the existence of God is, in all phases of it, the least susceptible of impressive statement; but the data on which it builds are more convincing than any mere argument. And the historical argument builds on the evidences for divine overruling. Its data are the data of providence. The best reason, by and large, that any one can find for believing that God is can be no other than the reason for believing that he rules in all spheres. That he created means that he was; that he rules means that he is. If we may claim to know any truth of religion, this is the truth which we know best; but, if any truth of religion is inexplicable, this is that truth. The faith which digs too deep to be overthrown towers into view where ignorance and knowledge meet. We may not be able to specify any current event which was ordained expressly for us, our church, our nation, or our race. We may not be able to persuade any one, no, not even ourselves, that for us providence has hushed the winds or opened a flower. And yet we may be able to read in the open book of our lives the lesson that all things are ordered in wisdom and goodness. We may feel assured that we have obtained the very benefits asked for, or better than these, through occurrences in which God has not for a moment let his hand be seen, yet has not ceased to act his part. Again

and again we have received what we had not asked for and did not welcome, but it has brought to us what we did ask for and welcomed. Although we do not know all about providence and prayer which we would like to, we may believe all that is needful, and will find our faith warranted by our knowledge.

(2) Miracle

So manifest are the difficulties of this subject that not much need be said about it; for the limitations of our knowledge, which it belongs to these pages to point out, are all one with those difficulties. There is no real obstacle to believing miracles possible. So vast and so involved a scheme of finite objects may very well call for the regulating hand of the Maker. He would wish effectively to rule what he has created. For the most part his undetected providences would answer the purpose, and these might be accorded, as we have seen, to the prayer of rational creatures. But it may easily be that he would wish on occasion to present himself. It would be indispensable to this purpose that he should do something which all that saw it would know could be done by no other than himself. He might perhaps wish to achieve directly by his own intervention objects worth intervening for. Or he might like to send a message, and to certify the messenger. Let us suppose that the miracles of which the Bible tells the story were performed in our days and before our sight; could we doubt that they were miracles? As to some, yes; as to others, no. Could we reasonably refuse to let these fulfil their office? Could we close our ear to a divine messenger thus authenticated? Could we hold out longer than Pharaoh did against the plagues of Egypt, or refuse as obstinately as the chief priests and Pharisees to understand the raising of Lazarus? If we could have the

evidence which Thomas received would we not rejoice to confess the doubting apostle's faith? Surely God might find occasion for miracles in those days; they might do their office at that time and leave to our time the blessedness of believing though we see not. It is not unreasonable to concede that there have been occasions for miracles. It is not unreasonable to believe that God could provide them when the occasion for them arose. The difficulty for our day is to believe that they were actual. The want is want of evidence.

A century or more ago a miracle was looked upon as a violation of natural law; as a violation of natural law, contrary to all experience; and as contrary to all experience harder to believe in than to believe the testimony to it insufficient. This was Hume's objection. He was then understood to argue for the impossibility of miracles; his defenders now insist that he merely objected to the evidence for them. Of course, if contrary to experience, miracles would be incredible; but they might have no place in our experience and not be contrary to it; and they might have no place in our experience, yet be within the experience of other men. If contrary to law they would certainly be contrary to experience. But they would violate law only if they produced disorder, that is if they in the least changed the results which all the forces engaged would produce. But as we ourselves continually produce results which part of the forces operative would not produce, and as we do it by the superior energy of other forces which we employ, so God may do. It is just this which makes the marvel a miracle. The forces we use are counter to the forces which would have prevailed without our act; but the result produced is not contrary, in any pertinent sense, to a purely natural result. Art is different from nature but not contrary to it. Art uses nature to break into the course of nature,

not to break nature's laws. God may do the same. But the question is, has he done so? Graver difficulties arise than the unsubstantial one which Hume suggested.

There are two difficulties in the state of the case, and one in the state of the testimony. Modern acquaintance with the resources of nature may make it increasingly hard to determine whether a prodigious occurrence needs a supernatural explanation. Long ago some few knew the secrets of nature so well as to get for themselves the name of magicians, practitioners of "white magic." Nowaday knowledge of nature takes the place of "secrets of nature." Then the discoverer jealously kept his discovery to himself; now he at once ambitiously publishes it to the world. Then he would find a personal profit in it; now, like Faraday, he has no time to make money out of what he knows. This greatly influences our mental attitude toward all inexplicable events. In those times the tendency was to credit such events to magic; in these times the tendency is to deny that they are miracles. Some have found it easier to suggest that Jesus understood the arts of natural magic than that either all the stories recorded of him are false, or the wonders of his life due to divine intervention. Others credit him with a large degree of the power over other men's minds which enables one to put a healthy soul in control of a diseased body, and so effect a "mind cure." At least the question is fairly opened whether the witnesses of the biblical wonders did not mistake their real character. This is not to revive the evasions which Paulus and lesser rationalists were at pains to invent; but it is to open a question for which, to the minds of many true Christians, there is no ready answer. They would have to say, on this account alone, "I do not know and I cannot know whether biblical miracles were what they were honestly taken to be."

A yet more formidable difficulty in the way of belief is found in the modern doctrine of evolution. The pertinent element in this doctrine is its fundamental principle, the law of continuity. Evolutionism has taught us that surprising results have been effected by the unbroken operation of natural forces, working according to inherent laws. A breach of continuity is precisely that which miracle would involve and precisely that which evolution excludes. The point just made was that agents heretofore unknown could be used to secure results so far unexampled; the point now is that, without yet being able to determine the agents or the processes of evolution, we may be absolutely certain that everything which exists was unfolded from what had been. It is not at all unusual for evolutionists to recognize the divine Ruler, but he is never thought of as interfering to do what natural agencies could not do. His wisdom is seen in the order of nature and in the general sweep of it toward rational ends. When an evolutionist is forced to concede that the result under investigation is beyond the capacity of physical forces, he places himself with the not small number of scientific inquirers who believe in transcendency of spirit, but at the same time regard this transcendency as just as much under law as gravitation or magnetism. The explorers of the Society for Psychical Research may gratify us by their readiness to believe in spirits embodied and disembodied, that animate us on earth and survive death; but of all modern men these who are so constantly peering beyond the border perhaps least feel the need of miracles. Evolution is believed in by many devout Christians; but some are led by it into the conviction that the wonderful new knowledge about biology darkens the problem about religion. They do not deny miracles, but they dare not affirm them. This attitude of agnosticism is strongly

reenforced by biblical criticism, which is itself but a phase of evolutionism.

This is not the point at which to discuss, so far as these pages must, the validity of the new criticism; we are here to notice only its influence on the problem of the miraculous. We know that practically all who have made a specialty of the higher criticism agree that a large part of the biblical writings, especially those of the Old Testament, are made up from various sources, and edited, perhaps reedited, by different hands. We may leave out of account the fact that many critics begin with rejecting miracle, and proceed to construct a history of the sacred documents in harmony with this denial; what concerns us most is the fact that, if an ancient writing with its stories of miracles is regarded as a compilation from many lost documents, this fact alone prepares the mind to suspect that among these earlier documents are certain traditional and merely legendary tales. There is no denying the possibility of such elements in such a book, unless there is clear evidence that either great critical insight or divine superintendence went to the composition or compilation of it. To many Christians evidence clear and conclusive to this effect does not appear to be ready and forthcoming. It is a part of tradition about the elder Scriptures, but not a guarantee nor a necessary part of the tradition.

Suspicion of this kind inevitably attaches to those miracles which seem to betray disproportion between the miracle and its object. The purpose of miracles is to establish results of proportionate importance; when such a proportion cannot be found the miracle necessarily loses credibility. Of this kind two miracles promptly occur to every mind, Joshua's arrest of the sun and moon, and Jonah's weird experience in the sea-monster. A miracle like these is as easily within the compass of omnipotence

as any other; but this is not at all the point. The point is that in very many instances those who reveal no skepticism as to other miracles feel that the first of these two must be explained away as a poetical fancy quoted from the uninspired Book of Jasher, while the entire prophecy of Jonah is to be regarded as allegorical. It is unmistakably such disproportion between the miracle and the miracle's object which gives it a resemblance to the wonders of mythology.

Beyond question biblical criticism has extended the domain of agnosticism. Not a few are by no means clear what is the truth, and see no way of deciding what is true as to some at least of the Bible's miracles. They may recognize a good purpose in recording these interesting tales, even the most marvelous and the least probable. These have served their purpose. It is possible to regard them as an integral part of inspired books, still to credit them with precisely the edifying character which they have always been credited with, while yet the only alternative to denying their historicity is to keep it in question.

Such a distinction as we have found in Old Testament miracles can hardly be drawn with regard to those of the New. In this case the most marvelous are not the least worthy, they are the most worthy of credence. They belong to the warp and woof of the book, and of the religion which accepts the book. Christ is more wonderful than any miracle, and yet more wonderful if in his case there was no miracle. Without miracle he would be too wonderful for belief. He is as essentially divine as human, and there was as great need to prove the reality of his divinity as the reality of his humanity. An undivine Christ would not be the Christ of Christianity, and a Christ without miracle could not be accepted as divine. If we have a right to say that we know Christianity to

be true, we have the same right to say that we know the life of Christ was attended by miracles. What we do not know is what the next chapter must take up, the relations between the divine and the human in him.

Yet we must here admit a fact which it needs no astuteness but only ingenuousness to recognize, that a curious limitation is declared concerning the miracles of our Lord. Mark says that in his own country "he could do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them" (6 : 5). Matthew plainly tells us why: "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (13 : 58). Are we to understand that our Lord had set up a rule in its relations useful but in itself unnecessary, that he had decided, and must stand to it as best, to grant miracles only to faith? If we draw back from such a supposition, if we must decline to see anything arbitrary in the exaction of belief as a condition to benefits from Christ for body or for soul, are we then to understand that with Christ the performance of great works, like the orator's exhibition of great eloquence, required the stimulus of a sympathetic crowd? Could he not rise to his best unless supported by spectators? Was it for him a little thing, just a faith-cure actually wrought by the mind of the patient, to lay his hands on a few infirm people, and heal them? We are told that the anointing which he received of the Holy Spirit gave him power, and he "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10 : 38); did he need to have man with him too? We say that his miracles were intended to encourage faith; ought we rather to say that they must be preceded by faith? Jesus himself bade the Jews believe, if not him, then his works (John 10 : 38); and if Philip could not take the word of Jesus for it that he was in the Father and the Father

in him, then let Philip believe him "for the very works' sake" (14 : 11). It would thus seem that the final appeal which he could make against unbelief, namely, to his deeds, required a certain amount of belief as its condition. This is always the case in our own spiritual relations. It is morally comprehensible in our case; in the case of those unbelieving Jews, or undiscerning disciples, does this requirement involve little noted and even unfathomable facts with respect to our Lord's miraculous powers? I think it does.

Hume's objection was an argument so clever as to invite suspicion, and to deserve suspicion; the more modern difficulty is in a habit of mind, a habit which has grown up with the amazing advance in knowledge of nature. It is increasingly evident that the evidence for miracles must be irresistible. The extraordinary character of these occurrences and of the testimony required by them gives them their value; but it leaves many minds unable to decide in their favor. Yet, in general, I think the proper conclusion is one which the obscurity of the topic would itself suggest to those who reflect on the Bible's stories of miracles: we may claim to know a great deal of the highest moment with regard to them, while admitting that we are ignorant about much of minor importance, unless indeed as a miracle gathers significance by furnishing a clue to the constitution of our Lord's person. If we cannot know all, we need not conclude that we know nothing on this now somewhat dreaded topic of miracles; yet if we are justly persuaded that we know something, we must not imagine that we have traced the labyrinth through and through.

(3) Inspiration

Miracles are wrought only upon matter, inspiration is worked into mind. As miracles thus involve the activity

of forces resident in the objects on which the miracles are wrought, if only by way of repressing those forces, so inspiration involves the participation of the minds which it affects, whether in elevating or in subduing them to the divine thought. Necessarily, therefore, there is always a human as well as a divine element in Scripture. The difficulties of our theme arise in part from this fact, and yet steadily to face the fact relieves the Bible of more perplexity than it causes.

The whole topic is open in our day for reconsideration, open as perhaps never before in the history of the Book. I may ask the reader to bear in mind that these pages do not attempt to set errorists right, but to show the orthodox, who will not, I trust, refuse me a place among themselves, that on this very momentous, if not precisely fundamental theme, we do not know so much as had long been familiarly taken for granted. Whatever open questions we continually leave behind us, we still have to ask in the final chapter whether we cannot get on very well without answers to these questions, whether a *modus vivendi* is not to be found for a generation whose lot is to " dwell in the midst of alarms."

No method of approach to study of the Bible can do away all ignorance about its inspiration. If we begin with denying all supernatural interventions, very much will be easy to account for, but not how the Bible won and kept its credit as the very Book of God. If we cannot make up our minds in advance about the supernatural, for this sole reason we shall be equally at a loss what to believe about miracles and inspiration. If we begin, as we do, with accepting the Bible as a special and priceless gift of the Holy Spirit, we are abruptly checked by the insoluble problems which we must now briefly review.

A progressive moral enlightenment is apparent during

the long ages of Hebrew history. Frankly, to say so is but to admit that moral sentiments early existed among the chosen people which later had to be condemned. So firmly were these sentiments lodged in the minds of the biblical writers that, even when participation was not avowed, this was sufficiently indicated by their silence. All this is the most familiar of difficulties. Who has not asked himself how we are to understand Abraham's polygamy, and his offering of Isaac? the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, and the partial extermination of the Canaanites? Jael's homicidal perfidy, and Deborah's exultant song? Jephthah's vow, and its seeming fulfilment? Samuel's hewing down of Agag, and Elijah's slaughter of the priests of Baal? Finally, how to explain the ruthlessness of the imprecatory psalms, and the hopelessness of Ecclesiastes? If we plead that in Abraham's day polygamy was not condemned, nor the sacrifice of human beings looked upon with horror, or at least that a father's right over the life of his child was undoubted, still it remains to be asked how it could be that a patriarch, so near to God, so noble and so well instructed in other things, received no inspiration on points so simple and of importance so extreme. After we have allowed for Pharaoh's self-hardening, we none the less wonder that the writer of the story could bear to represent Jehovah as sharing in the process. Let us say all that we can about the wickedness of the Canaanites, the need of sweeping the land clear of them, the right of Jehovah to put so unutterably debased people to death, and by the hands of any ruthless executioners that he choose; yet even then what are we to think of a warrant by divine authority of what would now be considered as an unpardonable invasion of territory and a breach of human rights? Or how could we regard a divine commission which to-day fastened on God's own people the barbarous

customs of ancient war? All of this is intelligible enough as a human history; how explain it as a divine inspiration? If we can clear up these difficulties, we can easily determine just how much God approved in Jael and Deborah, in Jephthah and Elijah, in the psalmist and the preacher. Those who lived either side of the line in our Civil War may recall the relish with which in those dreadful years they sometimes read against their brothers the imprecatory psalms, the astonishment with which they found that these psalms had a proper place in God's book, and a very satisfying quality, if they might be regarded as written by an inspired pen; but it is also to be hoped that all good Christians recollect with sadness and shame the sentiments which they could not now justify when they turn back to the dark and dismal past, as Englishmen have learned to turn with calmness to the fierce hatreds of Jacobins and Hanoverians, or to the Wars of the Roses. James and John were zealous enough to call down fire from heaven on a village of detested and inhospitable Samaritans, but we do not question that it was a great step forward in morals and religion when Jesus rebuked his disciples and, we may trust, exorcised their evil spirit.

And yet we cannot overlook that the New Testament shows no perplexity nor any advance in speaking of how God dealt with Pharaoh; that Abraham's faith was praised without any hint that to turn his God into a Moloch was a fearful outrage against God; and that Paul seems hardly less violent, though not so coarse, as the writers of vindictive psalms, when he has occasion to speak out against the preachers of "another gospel, which is not another." We may even find it easy to believe that if Paul could edit in our day his Epistle to the Romans, he would recognize in the ninth chapter some human elements which it might not seem necessary

to insist upon, and would know how to present the divine thought in keeping with the Christian sentiment of our age. But *we* do not know how to do this. If we think we do, we can hardly satisfy other students of the Bible as reverent and sagacious as ourselves. In a word, ancient feelings colored the ancient writings. We believe that the Bible then declared the mind of God to men, but we also see that his mind comes to us in a thought-form and a language-form which must be called human, which we dare not call divine. But how are these human and divine elements related, how are they to be disentangled and separately set forth? It would be as easy to call the whole book human as it is hard to call it all divine; but so easy a solution to so hard a problem is bound to be false. We can know in our heart of hearts, we have all our lives so known, that the Most High, the holy and the loving Lord of all, speaks to us in the ancient oracles; but we do not know always, and I do not see how he who believes in inspiration can ever know just what in all cases God would now have us to understand as his message.

In less important, less salient particulars, the several writers of the Bible reveal a personal element inextricably involved with the divine. So decided characters as Moses, Samuel, David, Solomon, Isaiah—or the Isaiahs—Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the whole line of minor prophets, with John and James, Peter and Paul, could not but leave in their teachings an impress as individual as their handwriting. This is sometimes called "the personal equation," as though it had to be reckoned on and allowed for as carefully as the nerves of the astronomical observer. When due allowance has been made for qualities which distinguished an ancient people, I do not find that the idiosyncrasies of writers leave much in addition to embarrass us withal. The personal equation

seems most important to those who would bring the writings of apostles into harmony with certain notions of our day, which it is plain that the apostles did not share, and which chiefly affect not morals, but Christian doctrine.

Now it is not to be denied that biblical theology is throwing a flood of light upon the several books of holy writ; and the method of biblical theology is precisely to ascertain what color prevalent opinion, the character of the writer, and the exigency which called for a writing would necessarily, and did actually, impress upon it. But biblical theology, with all the shaking up which it gives to current interpretation of texts, is so loyal to its own method that it has to disregard the hints and entreaties of dogmatic theology. This, one might fear, would end in undermining orthodoxy; but as a matter of fact, it is hostile to rash innovations in doctrines. It has not found that the views which have been patent in all ages to all readers of the book are misinterpretations. To a few who would like to be rid of these views, biblical theology uncomfortably insists upon them.

But we must not belittle the personal element in the Scriptures. How manifest is the character of David in Psalms, and the characters of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Hosea, and Habakkuk in prophecies, not to speak of the idiosyncrasies which gleam through the writings of one sort or another ascribed to Solomon, and which plainly enough belonged to somebody. Isaiah, now, by way of example, is in plainest view when his inspiration is fullest. We say, "No one but Isaiah was ever inspired to write like that." The Gospels conform more evidently to the personalities of the evangelists than to any distinguishing object in each book. If Paul, who tells so much about his spiritual experiences, and Peter, James, and John, all of whom picture Christ in free-hand drawing, and give us their several conceptions of

his teaching not like shorthand reporters, but each as much like himself as like his Master, if all these do not reveal their personal peculiarities even when it comes to presenting so important a matter as the doctrine of Jesus, or the doctrine which they hold about Jesus, why then Luther and Calvin did not do so, nor Spurgeon, nor Beecher, nor Robertson, nor Phillips Brooks, nor even do you, Mr. Minister, who preach yourself when you preach with effect, who step into view of all the congregation despite your humble and heavy-hearted, sometimes enthusiastic, attempts to " hide behind the cross," to tell what truth you think the people need, and which you too need, but have not yet lived—if, dear and reverend sir, you cannot get clear of yourself in preaching, even when you try hard to offer the truth which the Book gives, and better men than you have proved—if, upon the whole, what you or any other preacher is rules what he thinks and says, when he is at his best, why then it must be clear to you that the personality of the sacred writers pervades their writings, and not against their choice.

If we would be quite certain that in following Paul we do not leave Christ, we should note how much care Paul took to distinguish the gospel of Christ from the standard teachings of his day, and, *per contra,* how much influence by way either of acquiescence or dissent the pharasaic Judaism and the Roman governmentalism had on his views of truth. We will find that partly what he had experienced and partly what he had thought out had got itself intermingled with what the Holy Spirit revealed; and it falls to us to determine, if we can, how much we may make the Holy Spirit responsible for. This point must at once be separately considered as an aspect of inspiration itself. Enough if we here take leave of the human elements, whether general or individual, with a conviction that for those who reverence

the Bible as God's own book, it is necessary to reconcile ourselves to marked and perhaps embarrassing limitations on our knowledge. At the same time, I think it may be safely declared, as the result of all careful and candid attempts to distinguish the divine and human elements in Scripture, that in the greater proportion of cases the problem will present no grave difficulty, and its solution require only the ordinary and approved methods of interpretation. In the case of many passages always under discussion, it will be found that the most satisfactory expositions are those which unconsciously, it may be, proceed by distinguishing the divine and the human. And so more help than hindrance is got from this distinction; it justifies us in saying that we know, quite as often as in declaring that we cannot know, even when, as usual, what we know best is the very thing of which we must concede that at some point we know least.

If we are to accept the Bible as inspired, we must consider what this may mean. It is no longer of service to compare the process to performance on a musical instrument, of which the player is the Holy Spirit, while the writer is the flute and the writing the song. If possible it would be still less seemly to call the Spirit a penman, the writer a pen, the writing a message from God, and from God alone. Few would now venture to say what I have heard said, that the differences in literary style to be found in the Bible are not to be ascribed to natural and characteristic differences in the human writers, but to the selection by the Spirit of these several styles, so that in each case the writings resemble absolutely compositions of their penmen, although not in the least such. In other words, however lofty the claims for the Bible, the theory of verbal inspiration has given way for the most part to the recognition of human elements.

What part, then, has revelation in the composition of the sacred books? Paul always insisted that his gospel was received by him from God by revelation. He was fond of calling it a mystery; that is, a truth which had come to knowledge only through revelation. If other writers of either Testament were behind him in emphasis on the divine source of their messages, it was, we may believe, because no one disputed their authority. But what sort of process was revelation? Was it the objective presentation of an idea, as the Decalogue is said to have been presented to Moses? If it were in question whether Christ himself could be considered an objective revelation, there would be but one answer on the part of Christians; such a revelation he was. He was the living truth of God. He called himself so, and has always been so accepted. Is he the only objective revelation? Some insist that he is. The direct impression of an idea they reject as "magical." This reproach must mean, I suppose, that such a revelation would be entirely outside all methods of acquiring truth which the structure of the mind provides, and so would be arbitrary, abnormal, and incredible. But is it certain that God has no normal means of direct suggestion? We hardly know how much importance is to be attached to Paul's "visions and revelations of the Lord" (2 Cor. 12 : 1), but he claims to have heard while in this rapt state "words unlawful to utter." On the other hand, we must not fail to note that when he describes to the Corinthians the revelation, as he calls it, of what "eye had not seen nor ear heard, neither had entered into the heart of man," the greater part of the process might be understood of insight by the Spirit's aid into facts open to all (1 Cor. 2 : 6-16). We too may judge of spiritual things, because "we have the mind of Christ" (5 : 16).

But while this might seem quite in the line of the

Spirit's guidance, promised by Jesus when he first taught the doctrine of the Paraclete, and although many who discredit objective revelations are entirely confident that guidance into truth by insight into facts is accorded through the Holy Spirit to all succeeding generations as much as to apostles, or more, yet it would be as hard to explain insight through the Spirit as direct communication of ideas. To do either is impossible. We might say, to be sure, that illumination brings to light no other truth than such as appears in our experience, but how the Holy Spirit guides experience is utterly beyond guessing. He makes use of the truth, but how? He must use it that we may know it; we must know the truth that he may use it.

If we are baffled by the question how the Spirit taught the meaning of events, can we tell how he made known the events? Admitting that all the prehistoric tales in Genesis are traditions worked over by inspiration for spiritual profit to the favored Hebrew people, could we say how the Spirit inspired such a process? At Gethsemane all but three disciples were left behind, and the three were asleep; how did the synoptists find out what Jesus suffered there and said? Would it be like him afterward to tell of it? Did one of those left behind creep up and listen? Or was the whole occurrence brought to light by revelation outright? The story bears every mark of truth; who knows how it was learned? Is it worth while to guess?

If there is one question about inspiration on which believers in the Book are bound to disagree, and to disagree with painful sense of the importance of the issue, it is the question whether the Spirit of God in such wise aids the utterance of his messengers as to assure the inerrancy of their message. As we have seen, there is some room for question whether the prophets and apostles

always thoroughly *understood* the doctrines which they taught in the name of God. This has been noticed in connection with the general and personal human element in the Bible. But such uncertainty as there is, although it may touch matters of the highest importance, does not throw essential Christian doctrine into doubt. Does any such doubt arise in connection with the much-mooted issue whether the Holy Spirit afforded inerrancy *in statement?*

The striking fact with regard to inspiration, in the limited sense of help in utterance, is that very little is said about it in the books which we accept as divine. No historical book of either Testament claims it. Prophets barely mention it, as when Moses and Jeremiah are assured that God will "put words in their mouths"; but even the prophets imply rather than claim this office of the Spirit. It is enough for them if they can announce a lesson on the authority of Jehovah. In like manner, while the New Testament does not entirely overlook such aid in statement, it is specifically promised by the Lord only to disciples when under arrest, who need not then take heed *how* or what they shall speak, because it is their Father, not themselves, that speaks. Only by inference, and rather remote inference, is this a promise to the disciples when they were to write gospels or epistles, or even when they preached the good news. Paul speaks of Old Testament writings as "God-inbreathed," but I have looked in vain for any claim to help in utterance for the preparation of the New Testament writings except in the sole case of Paul, and in his case but once. Once he tells the Corinthians that he speaks "not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches" (1 Cor. 2 : 13). Even here he does not use an expression which signifies that the Spirit gave him so many words, mere vocables, but

one which means utterance. His term is not ἔπος or ῥῆμα, but λόγος. No support is provided for verbal inspiration, although it is clear that Paul regarded his language as aided by the Spirit of God, and I am sure I may add that to his mind what he said was thus kept clear of error. I will confess that it was with no little sense of relief that my own study of the New Testament on this subject revealed the solitariness of this claim to inspiration in the narrow sense. It can hardly be that this special aid in speaking or writing has the importance which our debates about it would imply. If so important, why was it mentioned but once, especially as Paul is so resolute, so unflinching in declaring his authority when it is in dispute? One may without great risk of mistake add that even in this single instance Paul, when he claimed such utterance as the Holy Spirit teaches, was not thinking about the authority of his teachings so much as about their freedom from human adornment and pedantry (1 Cor. 2 : 1, 13).

But what is this aid when it occurs? How does the Holy Spirit impart it? The older explanations, as we have seen, are lifeless now. There is no mechanical inspiration, no keeping phrases free from error by any method which does not involve the employment of the inspired person's own intelligence. We cannot say that the writings, in distinction from the writers, are inspired; although, at the same time, inspiration of the writers could not help being that of the writings too, in every practically important sense. Inspiration has been made by some a pendant of illumination. Thought so involves language that to give clear and deep thoughts must be to give more or less ability to state thought. Physical objects may be thought of through images, not names for them; but abstract ideas can have no effective place in the mind except as embodied in abstract terms. And

as religion is chiefly concerned with spiritual things, the suggestion that illumination involves inspiration is a valuable one, coming as it does from some who deny objective revelation. Others prefer to make no distinction between the special inspiration of the biblical writers and the special help which many a preacher feels that he is receiving from the Spirit in moments of singular elevation or elation. This explanation would not imply more than a relative exemption from error. Such enthusiastic moods have their own liabilities. So notable is this that the word enthusiasm was formerly used almost exclusively of ill-regulated and overheated sentiment. Inspiration of this kind which we experience, if it may be called by that sacred name, imparts power rather than accuracy of utterance, persuasiveness rather than precision. Not that in such moments genius does not exhibit an extraordinary adequacy of language, as well as amplitude and penetration of thought, but that the illustration out of our own experience covers the inspiration of the sacred writers may be doubted, even if it cannot be either certified or disproved. And if they were helped as we are, how are we helped? What the process with us? It is said that the Hebrew people took for granted that their prophets were aided to tell their message, and it is at least natural and seemly for us to take the same view of the Christian apostles.

Yet the entire process might, it would seem, be omitted without materially affecting the trustworthiness of the divine messenger. If he knew the truth and understood it, he could tell it, and would tell it, with virtual correctness, although he had no other help in speaking than is involved in the impartation to him of the message which he is to convey. Such a state of facts would account for the honest and numerous incongruities of statement concerning the same event, as when we read four reports

of the inscription on the cross. Witnesses always are liable to such discrepancies. We are often reminded of this by advocates of the Bible's authenticity. Here, they tell us, is a marked sign of the veracity of the writers. True enough, unless the Holy Spirit undertakes to preserve them from all error in statement, in which case the responsibility is turned over to him, with the result that the diversities which led us to trust our human authority, now lead us to question a divine authority.

As to all these uncertainties about all forms of inspiration we may say that they do not impair the confidence with which we accept the Bible as a record of divine revelations, regard its contents as made known by the Holy Spirit, and its elevation, adequacy, and unpretentiousness of style as worthy of Him who gave us the Book. We may claim to know as divine the volume which has held the place of the word of God in all generations; but as to how its writers were inspired, how they were given insight, how received revelations we know nothing whatever, and there is no clear indication that the writers themselves knew. The Book plainly reveals God, but revelation is an impenetrable mystery. And the mystery grows with any attempt either to heighten or to lessen it.

4. The Attributes

As Creator and Preserver, God has to be thought of only as an eternal, wise, and mighty Spirit. But we cannot well forbear to call him God. No one who believes in a personal Maker regards him as less than the Most High. If we yield to the universal and exigent demand, if we ascribe to the Most High all perfections, we are but yielding to that which is highest in ourselves, and which is trustiest at its highest, namely, the demand of our moral nature. Whoever can persuade himself that

God is wanting in anything good, as Stuart Mill thought him deficient in power, has his opinion to himself. The mere idea of an all-perfect Being does not require us to believe that there is such a Being, but the response of our souls to that idea assures us that such a Being exists as the complement and archetype of ourselves. Once that idea is taken in, no Being less than the All-perfect can be worshiped as God. Lacking any excellence the Supreme would be to rational minds an object of distrust and even of horror as great as the trust and reverence which he now may claim. Since Kant's criticism of the theistic arguments the moral argument has been in some form the most widely and amply satisfying. God is all-perfect, and the All-perfect exists. We may claim this much knowledge about God as such.

But the divine perfections blind us by excess of light. If they were less than perfections, we might look for an uncertain showing by them; but being without blemish, they seem to leave nothing in doubt. Yet it is when the case has become as clear as possible that the obscurity begins. In the shadow of so great effulgence the darkness may be felt. It is not more certain that God is all-perfect than it is uncertain what his perfections will lead him to do. The infinite is always the inscrutable. So far Mansell was right. His error was in making God in all respects infinite, in making him the Infinite. Of course, if God were sheer infinite, he could have no quality at all; for the infinite is the all-inclusive; every quality excludes a different quality, and is thus a limitation. All this is old straw threshed out long ago. But under the chaff this good seed-thought was found, that God is infinite in excellences only. Excellences exclude what is not excellent, and so far are intelligible. If, then, we add that an excellence is unlimited, we have not thrown its nature into confusion, it must still be of the same

sort as limited excellence, but we have made it doubtful what this excellence will involve.

Doubt is bound to arise, because the most logical inferences from divine perfections are startlingly contradicted by the facts. Such an assertion as this ought to be tested. Well, let every one who will make his own test. Let any one infer what he can from a divine perfection, and see where he comes out. For example, is God all-powerful? Then he will have his own way—if he knows how. Or is he merely all-knowing? Then he will have his own way—if he can. Let us say that he is both almighty and all-wise; then he must be having his own way in everything. There is no lack in him that he should fall short of this, and no capability outside of him to prevent it. Could any inference be more logical than that God has his own way? Could any inference be further from fact? God does not have his own way with us. His ways are not our ways. I do not here refer to human wickedness, but solely to the fact that men thwart what the wisdom of God has devised and his power begun. Men are mutually destructive and self-destructive; thus they hurt the best work of God; thus they defeat his object, whatever object he had in making man.

Such being the situation, to the infinite power and wisdom of God add infinite kindness. It follows that he will not allow any evil to befall any creature; but the world is full of evil to man and beast. Even the destruction of plants seems in a way to be an evil. If it is done wantonly, if out of mischief one breaks down a rose-bush, crushes a violet, uproots an arbutus; if with love of destroying, like nature's, one shovels wheat into a river, or flings away the fruits of an orchard, the evil is disgusting. Even when vegetation has to be destroyed in order to support animal life, only because we are used

to it could we fail to find it in itself regrettable. How much more grievous and stern the evil when sentient creatures pay in their own terror and anguish the price of their own destruction. God is infinitely strong, and wise and kind, but his world is the scene of distress the more poignant the higher the rank of his creatures. Why does he let it be so? No one can tell. No one has even made a good guess. Add, then, that God is infinite in holiness, that he insists on moral excellence with infinite energy because it is of infinite worth, that sin is the one thing utterly hateful and hostile to him; and then it becomes certain that, abhorring sin as an unmixed evil, knowing also how to prevent it, and being quite able to prevent it, he has not allowed sin to exist; yet it exists. Now of the things said this is the sum: Almightiness and omniscience imply that all things go as God pleases; add benevolence, and it follows that he has never let harm happen to any one; add holiness, and it follows that sin has never existed. The logic of the divine perfections defies the facts, and the facts defy the All-perfect.

The attributes instanced would be most generally recognized as essential to the Godhead. Power, wisdom, goodness, and holiness are not all which can be called essential, but these of all essential attributes perhaps involve, if treated dialectically, the most glaring contradictions to fact. Such incompatibility of careful deduction from the inmost reality in God with palpable outer facts is an almost unbearable anomaly, a well-nigh outrageous paradox. It seems to threaten one, as if it were diabolical and must be fought off like a temptation to unpardonable sin. Agnosticism is the only refuge. It is precisely at such a point we ought to remind ourselves that there are stretches of knowledge inaccessible to us, and that to disregard this fact, to trespass on ground forbidden to our finiteness, is to bring on ourselves confusion of

thought, dismay of soul, and incur thus a penalty which to a serious mind may seem greater than it can bear. A Christian agnosticism is indispensable to theological sanity, and ought to be as great a comfort as it is a safeguard. It is obviously the element of the infinite which here baffles speculation. To use familiar terms, we can apprehend but not comprehend the infinite; we can touch but not embrace it. Which is only to say that no one is competent to draw inferences from that which he does not understand. Small children make that mistake about a wise parent's restrictions, and it is worse than childish for grown men to repeat the mistake with regard to the intentions and doings of God.

These perplexities are not to be escaped by any scholastic distinctions between essence and attributes or accidents. We cannot do away with so paradoxical outcome of reasoning about the Supreme Being by insisting that attributes are only names, amount to nothing, do not describe realities in the divine essence. This would be quite too summary a dismissal of the problem. If the qualities of God are unreal, God is unreal. Yet it will not answer to say that attributes are realities which make up the divine essence, urge rival claims, and cause discord in that essence. The "accidents" cannot be treated like a scapegoat, and commissioned to bear away the offense into the wilderness. The discord is in our thoughts, not in the nature of God. And it is not competent for us to take up the ruthless attitude of Emanuel Kant, to pronounce all our knowledge but relative to ourselves, true only for ourselves, leaving in complete uncertainty what may be true of that unknown and unknowable thing-in-itself which we call God. Outright agnosticism fails, if not at this point, then at some other. A philosophy of knowledge which explains away knowledge, explains itself away. Our agnosticism must be

Christian. We must be permitted to know God, although we can know him but in part.

If, now, we are perplexed by the question to what purposes the attributes of God should lead, no wonder that the difficulty grows when we come to ask what those purposes actually are. Over this problem the contention has been long and vain. Although the battle has slackened, it continues, as is the way with other drawn battles.

5. A Drawn Battle

When debate on some point of speculative divinity has lasted a full hundred years and gives no sign of ending, when it has run a thousand years, when it has held out for a millennium and a half, if meanwhile no unequivocal text can be cited for either side, if opposite inferences can be drawn from the Bible with equal facility, and the choice between inferences is evidently fixed by prepossessions, is it not well then, if ever, to arrange a truce, and to consider whether, after all, the question may not possibly be one of those which can never be answered? Each side may be claiming a victory, but this is always the way after drawn battles. Both may resent having the results of so mighty a strife thus belittled; but this too is what comes of a drawn battle. Any one who thinks it high time to declare that he will accept for truth on such a matter only the explicit teaching of the Bible, be it more or be it less, and who denies the authority of inference either from Scripture or philosophy, such a man ought to be prepared to find his views decried as shallow, barren, dry, maybe dangerous; while the rejected inferences are extolled as noble, rich, and full, even as superior—one does not catch himself quite saying it—superior to any doctrine on the subject which the Bible is at pains expressly to teach.

Such a subject is the one debated between Calvinists and their adversaries. The controversy bears all the marks of a drawn battle. It has raged for the fifteen hundred years since Augustine; on the most vital point in dispute not one decisive text has been brought forward by either party, while, on the other hand, Christ himself notified us that just this point is beyond our comprehension; in default of explicit texts counter inferences are drawn from Scripture with equal readiness, and with equal disregard of implications from other passages; each side warns the other that we cannot comprehend the relations of the Infinite to the finite, and each uses this caution for the defense, but not for the correction, of its own positions; each side is reenforced by the prepossessions of its partisans, prepossessions experiential and philosophical, and each claims that the battle is turning, or will presently turn, in its favor. If under such circumstances a debate may not be regarded as indecisive, under what other circumstances might it be so regarded? We cannot well mistake the lesson of history, but can we bring ourselves to accept the lesson so easily read? I am afraid not. We know so little about divine election that we are very tenacious of our opinions on it. On this subject more than on any other it is a ticklish thing to tell a man that possibly he is overconfident in opinion.

The issue is threefold: as to individual election, as to conditions of election, as to execution of election, or the divine calling. I must state what seems to be the clear teaching of the New Testament, and then indicate the points at which that teaching stops short of vindicating the contention of either side.

The New Testament with some copiousness teaches that God from eternity predestinates certain persons to special functions in his kingdom; for example, the

Hebrew patriarchs as distinguished from other persons in their families, David and his house as distinguished from other houses, Paul as apart from other apostles and preeminently from other persecutors. Election to functions is distinctly a sovereign act. Less noticeably, but still explicitly, it is taught that God elects some persons unto good works. "We are his workmanship," wrote Paul to the Ephesians, "created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God before prepared that we should walk in them." In the same way the classic passage in the eighth of Romans explains that "all things work together for good," because God predestinated those whom he foreknew to be "conformed to the image of his Son." As to the election of some individuals to eternal life, not a few anti-Calvinist exegetes agree today with Calvinists so far as the election is concerned, but object to the further Calvinistic exposition of these same cases. There is no need to quote the standard and familiar texts for individual election.

It may be added that natural theology supports this doctrine. The argument is brief and cogent: God foreknew what would come of creating the human race, and he created it. If this does not involve purpose to provide for the existence of some who would be saved and of some who would be lost, then foresight can have no relation to purpose. The good that accrues must have been intended; the evil must have been allowed.

From extreme positions which natural theology is ever proposing the Scriptures themselves warn us away. For example, if the somber ninth of Romans seems to intimate that God selected, and had a right to select, any persons to sin and perish, this very chapter relieves us from drawing conclusions repugnant to conscience, even if it does not adjust these conclusions to what seem its premises. It explains the rejection of Israel by the

fact that the people did not seek righteousness by faith. As though Paul himself meant to warn us back from taking the stern sayings of the elder Scriptures in bald literalness, he quotes in the eleventh chapter from a psalm, "Let their table be made a snare and a stumbling-block," and then adds, "I say then, did they stumble in order that they might fall? God forbid!" Whatever else we are to understand from these tremendous sayings, we must not understand that stumbling and hardening were intended by God, or were due to anything else than the misdoing or unbelieving of the wicked themselves. The question is not how Paul's seemingly incongruous statements may be reconciled; possibly Paul did not think he had found a reconciliation; the critical question for us is simply this: have we a right to infer from one set of passages a doctrine counter to the general tenor of the Bible, when the disproof of such an inference is afforded, even provided for the purpose, in the context itself? The question answers itself. The forms of words that might seem to teach predestination of some men to ruin are inconclusive, and if they remain mysterious, remain all the more inconclusive. Here emerges the first particular about which we must remain in ignorance, to wit, how it is that the election of some men to eternal life does not of itself involve the election of others to eternal death. If any one thinks that this ignorance may be removed by considering the conditions of predestination to life, he is predestined to disappointment. But let us take up the conditions of election.

Here we venture into the very thick of the fight. And here we find a cause for the interminability of the conflict. It can be nothing else than that neither party is justified in the position which it takes. Neither can possibly know the truth of what it alleges as against the other party. The admission that some men are ordained

to life would not be made by any anti-Calvinist, were it not that he thinks he has a satisfactory reason for this election; yet the election is insisted on by the Calvinist at cost of denying every reason alleged for it. In point of fact, neither the assertion of a ground for election nor the denial of it is justifiable. We are invincibly ignorant of the conditions of predestination. We cannot penetrate the mind of God and spy out an answer which he has never vouchsafed. To the question what are the conditions of election it was natural to hope that an answer might be found. But it has never been found. We have now to ask, why this disappointment, and why only disappointment can be looked for. The really vital question is, did God foreordain to good works and eternal life, irrespective of what he foresaw men would decide to do? Commonly the question takes a more specific form: Did God elect any because he foreknew they would believe, or do some believe because God elected them? No one knows. No one has any means of finding out. I appeal to the reader to be candid. Let the real situation be considered.

For one thing there is no reason to deny that foreknowledge conditioned foreordination. There is no *scriptural* ground. Peter's word for it is, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God." Paul's word is, "Whom he foreknew he also predestinated." Now it happens that scholars of the highest authority are unable to persuade each other that "foreknow" does or does not virtually mean "foreordain"; but they leave us at liberty to believe that whatever else "foreknow" does or does not mean, it means foreknow. There is no ground in *reason* for doubting that foreknowledge conditioned foreordination. Purpose involves foresight of ends. If in the matter of God's election foresight is not logically prior to purpose, it is the only case in which

God has formed a purpose without knowing why. Not even Calvinistic consistency need hesitate to regard foreknowledge as a condition of foreordination. Calvinism wants to defend the freedom of God's will, whatever the cost may be to the freedom of man's will. But God need not will blindly in order to will freely. What God needs to foreknow is not a situation certain because he has already decreed it, but what the situation would be *if* he decreed it. The real issue is not whether God foreknew as a condition of foreordaining, but it is:

What did God foreknow about the elect? It was not merely that they would exist, for in this sense he foreknew all individuals. It could not be in this sense that "whom he foreknew he also did predestinate." Just as certain is it that what he foreknew was not merit in the elect. Election is sheer grace. No one denies this. It is an "election of grace. And if by grace it is no longer of works; otherwise grace becomes no longer grace."

So far it is clear what is *not* the condition of election. The actual condition is nowhere stated. Every text which promises to clear up this point is met by another that renews the mystery. The only condition generally thought of by anti-Calvinists is faith—faith either as a natural receptivity or as a trust imparted by God and accepted by man. And yet there is no decisive text either for or against faith as a condition of election. If one should rely for it on the words of John, "As many as received him, he gave to them the right to become children of God, to them that believe on his name," and it seems a text very much to the purpose, we must not overlook another text as explicit to the contrary, "As many as were appointed unto eternal life believed." Or if we catch at Paul's explanatory word to the Romans, "Faith comes of hearing, and hearing

through the word of Christ," we must listen when he also tells the Corinthians that "a natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, . . and he cannot know them." Nowhere in the Bible is there an unequivocal yes or no to the question, Is foreseen faith the condition of foreordination? And the case is no better when we "hearken to reason." The arguments *pro* and *con* run somewhat thus:

"God is sovereign," says the Calvinist. "But he is not capricious," says the anti-Calvinist.

"True, but as sovereign his reasons cannot be outside himself." "On the contrary, since he is unchangeable, his relations to other beings must be determined by differences in them."

"Oh, then, you think he elected some because he foreknew they would be worthy?" "Not at all; yet I think he could not elect any who he foreknew would reject him."

"But all carnal hearts reject him," says the Calvinist. "All who at length accept him know that they have themselves accepted him," replies the anti-Calvinist.

"But their very faith was his gift." "Yes, again; but the gift did not become theirs until they had accepted it."

"I say that native depravity prevents men from accepting any spiritual gift which is not forced on them by the Holy Spirit." "And I say that either native liberty or common grace enables all men to accept the Spirit's gifts. And besides this, will cannot be forced."

"Well, then, we always arrive at the issue, Is the will active or passive in regeneration? I repeat that it is passive." "And I repeat that it is active."

To sum up the general principles always appealed to, and always inconclusive: Calvinists argue from the sovereignty of God, anti-Calvinists appeal to his love; Cal-

vinists insist on the helpless depravity of the human heart; anti-Calvinists rely on every man's consciousness of freedom. Wesleyans specify that the gift of the Holy Spirit to all men has been secured by the atonement, and that this gift empowers all to accept Christ. At this point the question on what condition God elects resolves into the question, how God executes his election. The problem of conditions becomes the problem of the divine calling. And it cannot be solved. This new enigma rests like a seal on the closed book of the divine counsels. Between God and man is plied the agency of the Holy Spirit; and we could settle once for all the conditions of election if we only knew how the Spirit of God is related to the spirit of man in regeneration.

Surely no one can fail to see that if the soul of a man has no part in the process of his new birth, then nothing on his part could have been a condition of electing him. The new birth executes the divine decree of election, and the new birth, on this supposition, takes place apart from faith. On the other hand, it is equally clear that if the human soul has something to do in the process of its new birth, this something conditions executing the decree of election, and as foreseen must be a condition of forming that decree. Faith or some other form of receptivity reckoned on must, on this supposition, be as indispensable to election as it is to executing the election. Without it the election would be futile.

But we can only guess about the relation of the divine to the human in regeneration. How can one help seeing that passages which tell us that the truth is the Holy Spirit's instrument in regeneration imply that to accept the truth is a condition of regeneration, a part which a man has to perform? And yet is it not just as clear that passages which say that the unregenerated heart cannot accept the truth imply that to accept the truth is

not a man's part in his own regeneration? We may, indeed, guess that faith and the regenerative process proceed *pari passu;* but this is at best a guess; and it is a guess in face of our Lord's express declaration to Nicodemus that we cannot know how the Holy Spirit effects the new birth. The long and fruitless controversy was natural, but it was all a mistake, and it ought to stop. If theology has anything further to offer, it ought to be put forward as only a humble surmise about matters which the Master said were too high for us.

The case might here be dismissed were it not for the sake of showing how far both sides will go in declaring for truth what they cannot possibly know, and even in vexing the church about mere opinions. As to the process of securing the new birth, Calvinists and Wesleyans agree that no one comes to Christ except through the persuasions of the Holy Spirit; but Wesleyans hold that the Spirit draws all men alike, while Calvinists maintain that he draws the elect specially and irresistibly. This is the proposed distinction between common grace and special grace, between general and effectual calling. The Wesleyan is persuaded, in the language of the late Professor Miley, of "a universal grace through a universal atonement; a grace which lifts up mankind into freedom, with power to choose the good." But the Calvinist will have it that on account of the hardness of the natural man, he is bound to reject the grace of God, cannot be persuaded by the truth, and if he is renewed at all, it must be by a creative act which makes no use of means.

Now it is quite open to any one to hold either of these rival views, so long as no more than an opinion is pretended to. There is logic in abundance for each opinion, so long as part of the facts are left out of account. But what justification is there for claiming the support of the Bible for two antagonistic doctrines, neither of which

is taught in the Bible by so much as one word? Or what propriety is there in hateful disputes, and the disputes have been full of hate, over points utterly beyond demonstration? As to the gentle and genial doctrine of the Wesleyan, not always so genially or gently maintained, it must be admitted that the gospel constantly plies men with invitations and warnings which take for granted the hearer's freedom, while other texts imply his present bondage. It has seemed to the Wesleyan a short and safe way of reconciling these opposing facts to say that the bondage is broken by the universal gift of the Spirit, and that this gift has been secured through the atonement. But when we turn to the New Testament for the alleged process, what do we find? We find just two texts declaring that the Holy Spirit is given to the world at large. Christ said that the Paraclete would convict the world in respect of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Stephen told the stiff-necked Sanhedrin that they always resisted the Holy Spirit, as their fathers had done. Now as the Holy Spirit is peculiarly a gift to Christ's own people, it is not surprising that his relations to unbelievers are so little dwelt upon; but that little does not say that the Spirit is sent to worldly men in consequence of the atonement, nor that, being sent, the Spirit confers on all unrenewed hearts ability to accept the gospel. This triumph of Wesleyan theological inference is, after all, only inference, and inference without one explicit word for it in the New Testament.

The case with the Calvinist theory is, if possible, even worse. Calvinism has to disregard the whole bulk and weight of the gospel's copious warnings and invitations. These make at least an appeal for acceptance, and the appeal implies that they might be accepted. So much to begin with. Next, when the Calvinist theory of divine calling casts about for a text which says that the

general call—a call that at least convicts the world—cannot persuade the world, it is unable to find a single text for it. There is nothing to the effect that a special call by the Holy Spirit is effectual, while his general call is fruitless. Still more, when just one word is needed which declares the special call irresistible, that word is wanting. And naturally, for the very notion of compulsory volition, of unwilling willing, is self-contradictory. The Calvinist is not at liberty to allege that grace has thoroughly changed the heart before grace is accepted, because this is nowhere taught, while Christ himself warns us away from speculating about the process of the new birth. Neither party to this long controversy can know that it is right. The battle is of necessity a drawn battle.

Such a result will shock this one and that. It will be thought to endanger vital interests. But this may without hesitation be denied. Harm enough has come of trying to force a solution; none need come of admitting that the problem cannot be solved. Calvinism has two interests at stake—one interest evangelical, one theological. The *evangelical interest* is to maintain that salvation is purely of grace. But this interest is assured whether or not election turns on foresight of faith. Certainly justification is by faith, and so far salvation is conditioned on the exercise of faith. But this does not leave salvation the less a gift of divine grace. Faith emphasizes the grace. Well, then, if without disparagement to grace faith *exercised* is a condition of salvation, why may not faith *foreseen* be a condition of election? Is God free in saving a believer, but not free in *purposing* to save a believer? To be sure, the Bible nowhere states that God elects those who he foreknows will believe, nor can any one in any other way know that it is so; but for all this, such a supposition as fully guards the gracious character of the gospel as the highest Calvinism does.

In other words, salvation is a free gift alike in fact and in intention. It is an unearned and undeserved gift, although it is received only on condition of faith; that is, it becomes ours only if we accept it; and it is in purpose a sheer gift, even though God's selection of those who are to receive it turn on foreknowledge that they will accept it. The *theological interest* of Calvinism is in maintaining divine sovereignty.

But we have already noticed that inasmuch as God foreknew what his creatures would do, he appointed their destiny when he decreed their creation. This is an explicit teaching of natural theology. And this decree of individual salvation stands, whatever grounds or conditions may be alleged for the gracious election. Since God foreknew what his creatures would do, he decreed their destiny when he decreed their creation, even if every son of Adam were as unhurt by Adam's misdeed, and as competent to save himself by good works, as Pelagius ever dreamed; or capable of taking the first steps as Semi-Pelagians aver; or, at least, as free either to accept or reject the gospel as Wesleyans say that all have become through prevenient grace of the Holy Spirit. If a hyper-patriotic Irishman loads a bit of gas-pipe with dynamite, and attaches an American clock so ingeniously that the explosive will go off at a fixed hour and minute, then sets the thing running and leaves it under Westminster Hall, the enthusiastic patriot will be held by friends of those that get killed, and by the police, to intend all, at least to intend to permit all, which his contrivance effects.

Natural theology is as grim as the natural understanding of the police. It bids the Calvinist remain secure in the reality of sovereign decrees. If God foreknew what men would freely do in case he created them, and still decreed to create them, this makes his decree as absolute as their

freedom, although it leaves their freedom as absolute as his decree. That is, God is as sovereign as though men had no choice; men, within the compass of their ability to choose, are as free as though there were no God. Reason is confronted by a paradox: the decrees of God are at once absolute and conditional. It is impossible that they should not be absolute, because creation itself depends on God's decree; it is impossible that they should not be conditional, because human wills, once they are created, take their own way. We state the whole of our knowledge and of our ignorance when we say that *God absolutely decreed a conditional universe.*

Now if the interests of the Calvinist do not require him to deny that foreseen faith can be the condition of election, neither do the interests of the anti-Calvinist force him to insist that foreseen faith is that condition. The anti-Calvinist also has both an evangelical and a theological interest. His *evangelical interest* is in showing that God is good, and that all men can be saved. But he need not feel that he has failed to support these high interests unless he succeeds in proving what the Bible nowhere tells him, and what he can only guess, that foreknowledge of faith is in effect the same as foreordination. Why is it that he may be asked to remain contentedly ignorant of God's reason for electing any man to eternal life? Because, even though the grounds of election remain as secret as a downright Calvinist says they are, it does not follow that they are ungracious reasons. The gift of Christ assures us that no needful provision in behalf of any man has been omitted. It was in connection with the divine election that Paul wrote: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" To say that we do not know what is the condition of election is very far from saying that we do not know

whether God is good. The evangelical interests of both parties to the ancient controversy are practically the same. Neither side risks anything in abiding by what ought to be its agnosticism. The *theological interest* of the anti-Calvinist is really anthropological, and even ethical. This interest is in maintaining the freedom of man. If the will is not free, moral responsibility seems at an end. But here again we are to note that, whatever the relation of God's purposes to man's volitions, God has willed to make men free, and to effect all his ends through men's free choice.

The very fact that God's plans are too deep for us to see into seems to tell us that he is great enough to trust. The universe was made and is ruled by One who knew all about it before he made it. This is the highest security we can have for any good. Whatever we do not know, we know that his decrees cannot be capricious, for God is wise; that they cannot be evil, for he is holy; that they cannot be unkind, for he is good. Without knowing any more than that he rules, we might safely entrust ourselves to his eternal counsels, and say with pious but unhappy Eli, "It is Jehovah; let him do what seemeth him good."

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THE REDEEMER

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THE REDEEMER

ON a subject so familiar no limits to our possible knowledge can be important in the degree that they are novel or approach novelty; but to indicate those limits may easily illustrate the fact so constantly reaffirmed in these pages, that what we know best we know least. It could not be successfully maintained that we know nothing about Jesus Christ. Every source of opinions and beliefs concerning him is worthy of more or less credence, yet no source either of mere opinion or of settled belief can be appealed to which does not involve, imply, or even thrust into prominence the outstanding problems as to the person and nature, the mission and achievements of the Supreme Man. Let the appeal be to that generally decried, often confusing, always masterful purveyor of popular notions, to wit, tradition, and it will appear that tradition gives the views as to Jesus Christ which are actually held by men and women called Christians; but at the same time tradition, so much disparaged, so much followed, and for all but a few critics, if even to them, so impossible entirely to shake off, will as patly start perplexities as afford convictions.

Let our appeal be to unauthoritative but venerated literature in any generation since Christianity began, and we have a record of the tradition which obtained in that generation, perhaps as some leading mind tried to modify it, most likely only aggravating its perplexity. Trace, then, the story of forming dogmas. On the burdened threshing-floor history winnows out the corn and gives the chaff to all the winds of heaven. It would have us

accept the good grain as verities of Christianity, at least as veritably Christian; but we shall find ourselves instructed by history as much in the problems as in the accepted solutions about Jesus. Or if we study the authorized and enforced dogmas themselves of great ecclesiastical bodies, which of them all fails to wear a face of perplexity, to show the purple scars of conflict, to hint the very challenges and questions to which they had undertaken formally to put an end? But there is no stifling the questions, no stopping the challenges. They leap up as fast as they are put down. Even the most docile minds, if they think the thoughts they confess, may see and feel how little as well as how much they know about Christ.

Let us then rid ourselves, if we can, of all mere *opinion*. Let us consult only so much truth as we have experienced. Let us put into exercise our individual "judgment of worth," and be Ritschlian far enough to hold, avow, and be responsible for only the little or more which we have individually found in Christ for ourselves; still it will be the good which he has done for us; it will be that very good which, in spite of all effort to be clear of prying into matters that we cannot know and do not need to know, it will be the good which we have indisputably received; it will be no other than Christ himself, that will thrust into every face and stagger every man with the question, "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?" Or finally, since there has been some continuity and constancy in experience of benefits from Christ, that is, since these benefits can be traced back and back until we reach the record left by apostles and evangelists, let us, if we like, call ourselves "Bible Christians"; let us accept just so much as the Bible teaches, all of it, but no more; and then the New Testament itself will be found starting all the hardest questions, and

starting them just when it purports to give the answers. In a word, we know something about Jesus Christ; we know a great deal about him; but the things which we dare to say that we know best we will have to confess puzzle us most, and leave us convinced that as to these very points we know the least.

1. His Nature

Let us now consider some difficulties which good Christians get into in claiming that Jesus Christ is properly divine or deity. If we began with the representations of the New Testament, it would at once be objected that the New Testament is far from teaching the deity of Christ. But if we begin where we are, no such doubt confronts us. It is entirely certain that all but exceptional Christians now maintain, and always have maintained, that Christ is recognizably true God. Not, perhaps, each and every generation, but at least every distinct age in which the Redeemer has been an object of devotion or inquiry has had to contend with problems all its own. It may be precisely these problems which set an age apart. In many cases an answer is thought to have been reached. It has thereupon been accepted as a good answer by generation after generation, and yet sometimes in the end only to be found subject to an objection which was not at first quite clearly enough discerned. The supposed good answer may even turn out to be but a kind of *tour de force,* a bold assertion of downright contradictories, all in one breath. Always the question is how Christ could be true God and truly man. It takes different forms, but is always at bottom the same question.

For our own time and the times immediately preceding ours the form of the problem much mooted, and not altogether successfully resolved, has been how the humanity

of Christ affected the attributes and powers of his divinity. It is the problem of his self-emptying. Such a problem must sooner or later have arisen of itself among those who believed in the real divinity of Christ. It will be borne in mind that these pages are written not to change any one's traditional beliefs, but to show all what limitations are hemming the best-grounded beliefs, when for these is claimed the rank of knowledge.

For the typical Christian, then, the question of the self-emptying must inevitably have arisen; but it was actually started by Paul when he wrote to the Philippians that "Jesus Christ . . . being in the form of God, . . emptied himself, and took on him the form of a servant" (Phil. 2 : 6, 7). The "form" of which he dispossessed himself was radically, not superficially, peculiar to God; the "form" which he took was radically, superficially too, that of a servant. Contrast in essentials seems to have been intended, and extreme contrast. Another contrast follows, and an instructive contrast. It is the exaltation with which our Lord's obedience has been rewarded. If the exaltation can be sharply distinguished from the humiliation, so sharply must the humiliation be distinguished from the "form of God" which the Redeemer wore before he took on the "form of a servant."

When now these three successive states are recognized and acknowledged, then the seemingly unanswerable question is sprung, What was the "emptying"? It is a question with which we and those who came just before us have been much busied. God is characteristically sovereign; a servant is characteristically subordinate. God is essentially free; a servant is essentially bound. While in the form of God Christ followed his own will; while in the form of a servant he followed his Father's will. So far all is clear; but the unanswered

question is whether the powers which it belonged to the form of God freely to exercise, and which it belonged to the form of a servant not so to exercise, were emptied out of Christ and wanting, or were kept and voluntarily restrained. From the point of view concerning the nature of our Lord which has always been current and is current to-day, our effort is to find an answer compatible with his nature as so viewed.

For the old orthodoxy it was a suggestion to take one's breath away that, in assuming the form of a servant, Christ laid aside divine attributes. How could he lay aside divine attributes and not lay aside divinity? To the rudest heathenism a god is a being stronger than we, and to the highest theism God is a being infinitely stronger than we. For those who hold Christ to be "very God of very God," what suggestion could be more startling than that he stripped himself of the illimitability of excellences which make God to be God? Even although he remained the same person as before he emptied himself, he would cease to be of the same nature. At least it could not help but seem so.

And yet if God is distinguished from man by at least the extent of his capacities, how could Christ become a true man without putting human limitations on those very capacities? What his divinity expressly forbade, his humanity expressly required. It is easy enough to see that if his divinity did not have to be sacrificed to make him human, his humanity might show him to be divine. His divinity shone through his humanity. Nothing could prevent this except entire incompatibility of divinity with humanity. In Christ's ideal humanity there is an assurance of his divinity which cannot be adequately set forth by any form of words, but which has, and always had, singular persuasiveness. Merely for Christ to be the perfect man wins men to a conviction that he

is more than they are. To many who appreciate this fact a most engaging and rational exposition of all the contrasts and perplexities in what they think about Christ, and in what Christ showed himself to be when on earth, is provided by the conviction that his human nature must necessarily lay its restraints and limitations on his divinity. The self-emptying does not confound; it reassures us. The divine becomes visibly human; the human is visibly divine. When we work our way back to the representations left us in the New Testament we shall find enough of data to study; but as children of our own day we are here and now to note that it is the Christ who enters into our lot, who not only submitted to outward inconveniences, but to the trials of man's inner life, it is such a Christ as this who brings us to God, and is to us in effect what God is. No conception of our Lord could live before our eyes, none could be alive within our breasts, which did not find him, as behooved him, made in all things like his brethren, in limitations first of all, and then in their suggestion of what he lifted himself to, and will lift us to. As Christ is seen to be distinctly historical, he is seen to be above all history. The Supreme Man is the Supreme God. Such is the relation at this point of Christian agnosticism to Christian knowledge.

This historical and human reality of Christ, lucent and luminous with the eternal divinity by which he masters all history, or will in the end master it all, we hold fast in our day, and are going to hold fast, with possibly some needless feeling of defiance toward theological difficulties and objections. Once more, like Christ's disciples at the first, we are laying hold of the actual, laid hold of by it, before we speculate upon it. And this is reasonable. Facts are beyond price. Reality is essentially ideal truth, as the ideal is the essentially real. But if our

eyes are wide open to Christ, we must not begin to close them the instant questions arise. And questions must arise as to how he can be all we claim to know, while he is at the same time all that is implied by our knowledge. The question has not been distracting us quite so much of late, but it still lives, whether Christ could be as human as he certainly was, and as divine as we clearly see him to be.

Attempts to get rid of the difficulty have not been wanting in ingenuity. The most obvious is the boldest. This is to hold that the divine in Christ was humanized. "The Word was made flesh." To assume our nature was to humanize the divine, for it was to accept our limitations. Of course this leaves the existing impression of our Lord's divinity somewhat unaccountable, and it is with the existing belief, not with the New Testament's teaching that we are at present concerned. That Christ was divine could never have been seen if he was entirely humanized. However important to his offices, however indispensable as the substratum of his nature divinity may have been, all that could appear would be that he was thoroughly human. This does not correspond to what Christian people find him to be. They see more in him than that. Indeed, if his divinity had been so completely veiled as this theory of kenosis or self-emptying insists, it is not easy to see how acceptance of his divinity came to be a radical article of Christian faith. Popular Christianity is so far like the Bible itself, it is a set of practical convictions, not a scheme of theoretical opinions. This proposed explanation, then, as to how Christ could be both God and man does not solve the problem which current belief presents.

In so saying I by no means imply any doubt that the self-emptying was in some way a limitation. If we set the Master's claim to be one with the Father over against

his confession, "My Father is greater than I," the mere matters of fact are plain enough. While as divine he could not but be one with the Father, as a servant his Father was greater than he. But it must not for a moment be overlooked that our problem is not as to data recorded of his life, nor facts about his present relation to us, but exclusively about the interpretation of these. And here our knowledge of Christ, if we have any at all, is limited at the point where it is most complete. As in the New Testament his claims are often coupled with entire subjection to the Father, so our experience of Christ, of his identification with our lot and our life in him presses on every reflecting mind the question how all this could be, how he could be so human and so divine, so subordinate and so exalted. Thus far we have no answer. A few may therefore deny one or the other fact, especially the fact of divinity; but this is to convert the situation into an unintelligible paradox. It is more reasonable as a way of dealing with facts, far more practicable, and the course of most Christians in all generations, to rejoice in what we may claim to know, and meekly admit that just here is a limitation to our knowledge. There is recent attempt to clear up the issue. It does not lack inventiveness, but does it succeed?

The German theologian, Doctor Dorner, endeared himself to many Americans. Strikingly conservative as he was on most points, he furnished us with the tentative doctrine of a future probation. But his specialty was the doctrine of the person of Christ. He could hardly fail to offer a solution for the problem which he had so exhaustively studied. Our age he found recognizing that God and man belong to the same class of beings, are in species alike; but he stoutly insisted on the infinite and unalterable difference in their powers. How, then, could Christ possess both natures? It is inadmissible to

think of the eternal Word as laying aside his infinite powers at the incarnation, or as recovering them afterwards. Besides this inherent impossibility it would have thrown the affairs of the universe into confusion for the Logos to lay aside that control of all things which had been his function from the beginning. But a way of escape from the dilemma offered by a union of the illimitable divine with the limited human, by an intermingling of the offices of the throne with the offices of the footstool, Dorner found in what has been called the doctrine of "progressive incarnation." According to this theory, at the conception the Logos became part of the person of Jesus. But although personally united with the human which was derived from Mary, the Logos was not totally so united. That union progressed only so fast and so far as the human became capable of receiving the divine. Meantime the Logos still dwelt apart in the infinitude of his powers, and still ruled over the universe. But the human in Christ was constantly developing, until at the resurrection all its restrictions were escaped. Then the union of divine and human became complete.

At first glance this theory seems to cover every point. If a valid account of our Lord could be drawn up solely by inference from what his two natures each required, instead of by induction from the facts, no theory could be more satisfactory. It is true we ought not to assume over-hastily that the divine cannot accept limitations. This assumption, which is fundamental to Dorner's doctrine, is far from necessary. Creation is a multiform limitation on the Creator. His further doings must be consistent with what he has already done. He cannot treat what he has already made as other than what he has made it. Even sin, to God the most abhorrent of all realities, is a reality, a limiting reality, and what he

has done to remove it has cost him much. Is it then certain that the divine in Christ could not accept human limitations? And is it certain that the incarnate Word, while in the world, upheld and ruled all worlds? Or was this part of the estate to which he was restored? All authority was given him, but given when he was about to leave the earth. What to the present purpose is even more important, a limitation of the divine by the human, the precise thing repudiated by the theory, must have taken place just so far as the Logos became part of the personality of Jesus. No doubt Jesus all the while developed, and God all the while entered into fuller moral union with him. But a moral change like this is possible to any faithful servant of God, and wholly different from a metaphysical increase of the divine element in the personality of Christ. If any such increase actually took place, and a metaphysical increase, a progressive incarnation, purports to be an explanation of all that took place, how can the explanation be explained? If there was more of Christ day by day, was this increment to his substance of a sort to make him more completely personal? Or did the Logos enter incessantly into what Christ was without being personal? In other words, since a personal union of divine and human, according to the theory, was formed to begin with, how did this original personality march with these steady additions to what he was? This is certainly a somewhat extraordinary way of accounting for what we believe Christ was, and what we find him to be. And it seems artificial, it looks invented, and quite too ingeniously invented.

From the point of view of our relations to Christ, and we are now facing only present-day facts, experiences, and beliefs, does this doctrine of progressive incarnation expound the Master whom we know? It tells us that the human nature of Jesus, from the first of the same

species or *quality* as the divine, has now become *quantitatively* divine, and thus all real distinction between natures has disappeared. At first the Word was made flesh; at last the man has become the deity. But this is not what Christ is to us. At least this is not all that Christ is to us. In our experience of him he is still as essentially human as divine. He is not removed out of the range of fellow-feeling, nor unfitted to be the Judge of all men by ceasing to be in effect the Son of man. Those of us who feel best assured that our Lord wears our nature as well as that of his Father can hardly find so far an account of the relations between his natures which we would warrant to be a true account.

May we then fall back on an old and familiar view, that to Jesus belonged all the boundless attributes of deity, but he steadily suppressed their exercise except as from time to time he was minded or directed to use them? Those who like this well-worn representation ought not to leave out of account, and they have often been reminded of it, that once at least Christ said he did not know. He did not know the day and hour of his own coming. But how could he be the All-knowing and at the same moment not know? The question has never been suitably answered. It should even more be kept in mind that his life did not in the least show the restraint and artificiality which would attend complete possession and steady self-suppression of boundless capabilities. A life more spontaneous has not been known among men. And now in our day how confused and baffled we would be if we tried to enter into companionship with one who could become our companion only by incessantly repressing himself. It is certain that we do not so understand Christ. He became one of us, not by self-repression while here, but by exercising himself in our lot. We must once more conclude as we began that

for those who accept Jesus as now very Son of God and Son of man, while we lack no assurance of the fact, we do not at all understand the fact. We do not see how he was or can be both of our nature and our Maker's nature, be himself our Maker and Upholder, yet one of us. If we cannot prove that all the theories on this head are false, we cannot certify that any one of them is true.

Until our times it was ten or twelve hundred years since any similarly important and generally noticed discussion had taken place concerning the relation of natures in Christ. Differences strikingly characteristic of those distant times and of our own appear in the form of questions discussed. Our own times begin with emphasizing the historical, the human Christ, and go on to ask how his humanity affected his divinity. Those far-away times emphasized the divinity of Christ, and found that they must consider how his divinity affected his humanity. At the Council of Nicea they had agreed and decreed that Jesus was the eternal Son of the Father, very God of very God; how he could also be a veritable man is a question which they must inevitably meet.

It was an entirely reverent and natural answer that his humanity was only a seeming. So deep was the impression of his divinity which Nicea established that, as is well known, even Anselm did not know how to admit that Christ more than *seemed* to grow "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." But reverent and guardful of our Lord's divinity as this answer was meant to be, when it was proposed as long ago as the days of John, the beloved disciple showed how well he knew his Lord by insisting that the Word of life had been heard, had been seen with eyes and handled by hands. He went so far as to say that "every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is the spirit of Anti-

christ whereof we heard that it should come." A stern sentence, but no other sentence has been more fully reaffirmed by the court of history. This notion of long ago, as we now plainly see, would have made the Founder and Object of Christian faith both spectral and futile. And so it was patly declared that "whoever says Christ was only an apparent man, is himself but an apparent Christian."

Another ancient attempt to explain Christ admitted that he had a human body, but denied him a human spirit. It was after this literal fashion as amiable Apollinaris opined, that "the Word was made flesh." Possibly, as he thought, the furious quarrel between Arians and Athanasians might be settled by a harmless compromise like this. The Athanasians should be allowed the Logos, and the Arians might deny the human spirit of Jesus. How strange it would have been if in the course of ecclesiastical politics any such scheme of affirmations and denials about our Lord had been agreed to by way of compromise! Still, an opinion like that of Apollinaris has often been able to recommend itself; that is, to a few, for even when maintained with the theological acuteness of a Gess, or published with the popular persuasiveness of a Beecher, it has not been able to hold its ground with very many. Even to the apprehension of those distant times the manhood of Jesus was too exquisitely complete, and to our own times seems too energetically entire, too radically and organically one with our own, to allow of any metaphysical abatement or reduction. It must always seem that the theory of Apollinaris is a defective account of the relations which existed between the divine and the human in Christ. We must forego that pretension to knowledge.

Let the Fathers, then, make the most of the two natures. Let both be counted not only entire, but each

able to speak for itself. Even in our day such an opinion as this is not wholly a stranger to Bible classes. When the good deacon who presides, and has thought a little about the questions which may come up, is challenged to explain how Jesus could say, "I and my Father are one," and also, "My Father is greater than I," how ready, how ingenious, how ingenuous too, the reply, "In one case it was only the divine, in the other only the human that spoke." This has often ended all controversy for a Bible class, but it did not satisfy the thorough thinkers of an ancient day. If each nature could speak for itself, of course it could think for itself, no doubt have its own feelings, and certainly will the telling of its own separate thoughts. But a person is only a being who thinks, feels, and wills for himself; and so Nestorius and his followers naturally got the discredit of teaching that Jesus was two persons. A few Christians think so to this day. But I have heard one of their number insist that the charge is unfounded, and springs from the fact that his native Syriac has a word for which there is no Greek equivalent, a word mistakenly translated "person"; so that during all these centuries the historians have been slandering the Nestorians. Nothing can be plainer in the long run than that Jesus was not so utterly ambiguous, equivocal, and bewildering as two persons in him would have made him. If we know him at all, we know that the account of him called Nestorian was a great mistake. It was even a desperate mistake. We cannot break through the bounds of our necessary ignorance in such wise. Those that try only show how necessary their ignorance is.

Was then the case cleared up by a rival, diametrically opposite explanation? Such an explanation was attempted in the more winsome theory that, while two natures were bestowed on the infant Jesus, the divine

proved to be so much the mightier as to capture, control, and absorb the human. The simple abbot Eutyches was not aware what mischief he was sowing when he flung this seed-thought to the winds. Of course it was as good as to teach that Jesus had but one nature; and people said so. It was almost the same as the sometime rejected Apollinarism, or even the old docetic fancy that Jesus was but the specter of a man. And the doctrine of Eutyches made more trouble than the early docetism had a chance to make. It so embroiled the Christians as to offer them an easy prey to the conquering Moslem.

Some cure must be found, and a heroic remedy it proved. Both Nestorian duality and Eutychian unity must be disposed of together, and finally. This was pretty effectually done by affirming both the contradictories which underlay these rival theories. The famous council held at Chalcedon in 451 decided that Jesus had two perfect and distinct natures, yet but one personality. That he had but one personality was a decision against Nestorianism; that he had two perfect and distinct natures rejected Eutychianism. Ever since the fifth century it has been counted orthodox to bow to Chalcedon. But never was wedlock announced between more unfriendly ideas. Underneath Nestorianism might be the fact that Christ had two perfect natures, and underneath Eutychianism the fact that he had but one person; but when it was added that his two perfect natures were also distinct, how help seeing that they were both personal? No adequate answer has ever been given to this question. An answer was claimed, to be sure, in distinguishing between nature and person; but this was no more than a stubborn insistence that two distinct natures need not be two distinct persons. Of course *nature* does not mean precisely what *person* means, and yet a perfect and distinct human nature is precisely what a

human person is. It is intellect, sensibility, and will which constitute personality; but could the human nature of Jesus lack either of these and be perfect? Could it possess all of these and not be a person? It would seem as unthinkable that a complete human nature could exist without personality as that a human personality could exist without a complete human nature. When contradiction in terms is express truth, then the Chalcedonian account of our Lord's nature and person can be true. But these times of ours have ventured to study our Lord afresh, and the result has relaxed the grip of the Chalcedonian formula, and some at least are prepared to admit that when we couch the truth about Christ in this formula, we may know the most, but we also know the least.

That the decision of Chalcedon outran the truth is further shown by what those unflinching formulators further said and did. The decree of Chalcedon might serve as a mace to break the head of militant Nestorianism, and to club the breath out of the " robber " doctrine of Eutyches, but it did not leave the Christians thus savagely attacked on good terms with those who attacked them. And the time had come when so sharp disagreement in theology was politically unsafe. Islam as well as orthodoxy was to be reckoned with. In lively alarm the Roman emperor Heracles proposed to the infuriated theologians what he called an Irenicon, an institute of peace. Let us agree, he said, that Jesus was of complete humanity as well as divinity, but that his humanity had no will of its own. This was called an Irenicon, but it proved a challenge. Emperor, pope, and bishops were promptly embroiled. To us it is incomprehensible that the sublimated metaphysics of Christology, the outer and most shadowy speculation which could be indulged by those who accepted Christ as the God-man, would incense

nations. We hardly bring ourselves to notice what the trouble was about. It was a sacred theme, and that is why men put so much of conscience into disputes over it. But how could even conscience carry the dispute to such lengths? Ah, well, if it were but a question of personal honor, we know that it was not so long ago when a man of honor felt bound to wipe out an insult against himself, and prove that he was as decent as he would have people think he was, by giving his defamer a chance to kill him. There are soldierly men in Europe who have not yet grown ashamed of "the code." It would seem that we might guess how in those queer old times theological soundness might grow to be an affair of international policy.

Accordingly a council at Constantinople rejected the Irenicon. And in so doing it stood by the truth, if Chalcedon had already found out and declared what was true. For now, in 681, it was settled and decreed that each perfect and distinct nature of Christ had its own will. It must have been so, and yet this announcement seems like the *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole authorized exposition and explanation of the relation between natures in Christ. So far was it from knowledge, it serves as a good proof that along the lines attempted knowledge was impossible.

We do not escape the quandary if realism describes the humanity of Christ as generic and impersonal. One is constrained to ask what, in the view of philosophical realism, impersonal and merely generic human nature is. Can it lack the power to think, and still be generic? Or the power to feel? Or the power to will? If any human being were discovered who lacked any of these capacities, a commission would hardly be needed to inquire whether he was sane. Sane he could not be if his generic humanity lacked any one of these which are

the very marks of personality. Is it not going far if we explain the mystery of our Master's nature virtually as those Jews did who said, "He is mad"?

We have scrutinized the ancient and orthodox attempt to explain how Christ could be both God and man. It began with acceding the divinity, and applied its microscope only to the humanity; but must we not decide, as we did concerning the modern attempt, which begins with the humanity and peers into the divinity, that when those worthies knew the most, and the penetration and power of their thinking was prodigious, they stood on the edge of what they knew the least? Is not Christian agnosticism the sanest and most reverent attitude to take concerning the inner mystery of Christ?

But we must not forget, despite all the wonder of it, that he would be more than wonderful, he would be incomprehensible and incongruous, unless to those who deal with him he is both Son of God and Son of man. This point had been settled at the opening of the period which, as we have seen, was filled with bewildering and infuriated debates on the relations of his natures. Before this date the question was a primary one, What was Jesus? Was it admissible to call him divine? And what relation does that involve with the Father? The question of our times is, How does the human affect the divine? That of the next anterior, though distant period, How did the divine affect the human? That of the still earlier period now reached, the second to the fourth centuries, How was the Son related to the Father, the divine to the Divine? We have worked our way back to the gravest and grandest of all issues, to the most important of all councils. How much did the Council of Nicea settle for us? And what limit does it set to our knowledge?

From the age of the apostles onward Jesus commended

himself as in some sense divine. Misled or well led, each generation has instinctively trusted him as only the divine is to be trusted, and has thought it but proper loyalty to declare him one with God. Any voice to the contrary has been plainly enough a protest and an exception. It has been an exception which, when it had reduced the claims for Christ to a minimum, proved incompatible with Christianity. The early Jewish Christianity, for example, soon died out. The Ebionite insistence that Joseph was father of Jesus destroyed the solidarity between Jewish and Gentile believers. Paul made no mistake in denouncing as "not another gospel" one which was dominated by Jewish notions, notions only as to rites; but if this was a correct estimate of Jewish rites, it was quite as true of Jewish ideas, even when the disturbing idea was no less noble than belief in one God opposing belief that Christ was God. The early appearance and disappearance of the Ebionite sect showed how distinctively Christian from the outset had been belief in our Lord's divinity. And it was belief in his "proper divinity," in a divinity which belonged to God only, not to a demigod. This is signalized by the fate of the Arian proposals. Arius would have Christ regarded as divine, but not Deity, as created, not eternal, and as of different essence from God. His view was welcome to many, and held no inconsiderable number of adherents after its definitive rejection by the general council at Nicea. Yet, like Ebionitism, Arianism always had the character of a protest and an exception. Whatever question exists as to the Christology of the apostles, there is no room for doubt as to what estimate of Christ has been spontaneous and dominant from the apostles' day to our own.

But Christianity could not rest placidly in the mere belief that Christ was God. If most minds were satisfied

to harbor no question how this could be. some would not let the question sleep—how if he were God, he was related to the Father. The earlier uninquisitiveness would naturally prevail for a time. To be persuaded that God had been with men, and that they knew those who had known him, was enough to fill the mind of those early disciples. For a being less than the Supreme to come in the flesh might readily be imagined; but for the Deity to be incarnated was all that they could imagine. To look at the fact, not to analyze and pry into it, would be a rational form, and for a while the only rational form which their thinking could take. This seems to have been the case with the apostles themselves. I know of nothing more singular, or at the same time more fitting in their treatment of the subject than the absence of the whole train of collateral considerations. We may be in doubt as to precisely what Paul or John held about the nature of Christ, but there is no word from either of them which sounds like the working out of a puzzle. They state as unequivocal revelation, as sheer matter of fact, against a lower account of him, what they state at all, and curious speculation seems as far from their ways of thinking as doubt was.

But this, I say, could not be the permanent state of opinion, or of purely pious conviction, or of adoring faith. The notion which was current as to Christ on earth could not help become in reflecting minds a notion about his relation to God in heaven. The first exposition of it was perfectly natural. From one point of view it was called Monarchianism, the doctrine of one person in one God; from another point of view it was known as Patripassianism, the doctrine that the Father was the actual victim in the sufferings of Christ. A more serviceable name is the more general one of modalism,

the doctrine that those seemingly distinct divine persons, the Father, the Son, the Spirit, were, after all, but successive modes of God's presentation of his single personality. Sabellius, in the third century, made the theory elaborate and coherent. In all his dealings with the worlds God presents himself as the Word. In creating he is more particularly the Father; in redemption he figures as the Son; in the history of the church he is modalistically the Holy Spirit, and will finally return into his essential unity. Not a little interesting is the fact that, while modern theologians of greater or less fame and influence, like Schleiermacher and Swedenborg, have incurred reproach of heresy for offering an essentially modalistic view of the divine Persons, making them formal and historic, not immanent and eternal, the more recent and widely welcomed attempt to find a monistic basis for Christian theology tends naturally and comfortably to something like this ancient modalism. I do not say, am far from saying, that all monists hold to modalism; but it is plain that some do, such as W. L. Walker, in his strong, and to many, convincing book, "The Spirit and the Incarnation." It is obvious enough why to attribute all the energy, and even what we call the substance of the universe, to the immediate and incessant activity of God, is quite the same with interpreting not only Christ and the Spirit, but mankind and things as modes of the divine. And it is hardly less obvious that this view, so congenial to modern theism, is no longer repugnant as formerly to the orthodox and conservative.

Have we then found in this among the earliest of what are called heresies the fundamental truth, the vivid and wide-open vision of what Christ is to the world, and of what the Father is to Christ? This we must not make haste to say. We may be as hospitable and as

kindly as we surely ought to be to thorough and reverent endeavors in our times to bring Christian doctrine into accord with modern progress; but we can know little of that progress, can hardly come in contact with what is going on, without finding that theories of science itself, though enthusiastically advocated, are promptly disputed, and often by and by repudiated. Slow caution is not the attribute of conservative theology only; it is indispensable to true science and reputable philosophy. And thus apparently modalism will have as much ado in our day as in an ancient day, not to find courteous treatment, but to win general acceptance. So thorough-going identification of Christ with the Deity somehow shocks most minds. Not every trinitarian likes to sing Faber's glowing hymn, "Jesus is God." Father, Son, and Spirit were by and by formally declared to be one in essence; but who would not shrink from making them one in place and experience? It would be particularly perplexing to run into the mold of this doctrine the three successive states of the Son, to wit, before he became man, while he dwelt on earth, and after he returned to heaven. A convenient test is provided in the statements of Paul to the Philippians, the classic passage in which are ascribed to Christ "the form of God," "the form of a servant," and his present "exaltation." Can we freely and comfortably tell the plain but lofty story in this wise? God did not insist on existing in the way suitable to him, but laid it aside; and being still the same person, he took on himself the form of another person, of a servant to himself; was found fashioned like a man; humbled himself yet further, and in this guise became obedient to himself in his abandoned guise; therefore, being already exalted, he highly exalted himself, gave himself a name above every name, that at his name of Jesus, not his name of God, every knee should bow

and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of himself as God the Father? Too many of the functions thus referred to are simultaneous to allow an interpretation of them as successive. Any attempt to recount consistently a process throughout which the One continually presented himself as the two, instead of being historical, according to modalism, is so labored and unnatural that it cannot have been Paul's way of looking at the matter; nor could it be our own way, unless under stress of a theological necessity which knows no law.

If it were widely proposed to accept Sabellian modalism as adequately clearing up the interrelations of Christ to the Father, it would be necessary to go over again the scientific and philosophical objections to monism which we had to recognize in weighing our scanty knowledge as to the origin of life; but all which the present purpose requires is that we note how far short of knowledge modalism is from explaining the mystery of the Father's relations to the Son. We may admit, if so disposed, that modalism is sufficiently compatible with the nature and even the office of the Redeemer; but how can this confusing theory be accepted as an illumination of the subject which is least likely of all in theology to be clarified by speculation, or fitly set forth in terms of philosophy?

The natural and early rival of modalism was Arianism. But Arianism did not accord to Christ the honor which was felt to be due to him. The church could not finally accept it. Yet Arianism is quite free from the metaphysical embarrassments of modalism. Furthermore, a considerable proportion of the texts on this subject in the New Testament could be readily explained in an Arian sense. For example, the passage in Paul's letter to the Colossians, which exalts Christ above all creatures, which makes him creator, upholder, head of the body,

final cause of all, fulness of the Godhead for all, peacemaker and reconciler of the universe, this passage in a book which is clearly intended to bring to an end all adoration by Christians of inferior beings, and to exalt Christ in their place to the utmost, might nevertheless be easily interpreted in an Arian sense precisely when it sets forth the relation of Christ to the Father. For does it not say that he is "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1 : 15)? Is firstborn, or first begotten, the same as eternally begotten? Or is "the image of the invisible God" properly descriptive of a being identical with him whose image he is? Arianism may be a lifeless, uninspiring, and uninspired doctrine about our Lord, but it cannot be made out that it is incompatible with, let us say, a good half of the New Testament passages which afford some account of the preincarnate Son of God; nor can it beyond question be proved incompatible with the redemption which Christ wrought for men. No wonder that not a few perplexed thinkers who adore Christ have harked back to this discarded theory as possibly a true and lucid account of our Lord's relations to the Father. Why may it not be so accepted?

I confess for one that after a theory has been thought through and through, after it has been long weighed, and so weighed because it recommended itself to many, if any decision about the theory is thus reached, if it is reached by a sufficient number of persons as well qualified as any, and if it has proved to be a finality for later generations of wise and simple, such a decision has the force of a presumption for or against which now and then experience is found to lead. Men's lives are run into the mold of such a decision, and testify as to the theory decided about. It cannot be said for Arianism that it has such an experience in its favor; and to

disregard the sufficiently clear teaching of the church's experience in this matter as illusory would not be easy for any one who has regard for any opinions except his own. We must not overlook that the Arian doctrine, specious as it is, often apparently recommended by expressions in the New Covenant, noble too as many of its adherents have been, is a doctrine unattested by the enduring consent of Christians as a whole, and therefore cannot be viewed as a Christian account of Christ. We might be glad if we could, but we cannot know that this simple and easy theory is the truth about how God stands to his Christ.

We must turn, then, to the view which that Nicene age offered to Christians at large in all time. It is an offering to common minds, and has been astonishingly accepted by them, although in itself abstruse and even audacious almost beyond reckoning. What force of conviction, what deep experience of something truly divine in Christ, was needed to make possible the formulation, the authoritative announcement and general acceptance for more than fifteen centuries of the doctrine of the Trinity! The more difficult to believe it, the stronger must have been the reason for doing so; and that reason was such an adoration of Christ as made the doctrine of belief in the Trinity inevitable and necessary. That widespread and incessant war would be waged against it was to be looked for, and has not occurred. Now and then, here and there, Christians have revolted. Sometimes timidly, sometimes boldly they have signalized the prevalence of the doctrine by their protest against it. If the church has "so learned Christ, . . and been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus," there must surely be somewhat of reality in the doctrine of the Trinity. To be sure, Christianity may be all a delusion. All its spiritual elements may be as fantastic as untrue, certainly

fantastic if untrue; but no other dogma can be mentioned which embodies more of the manifold doctrines of our religion than the doctrine of the Trinity, and no one can reduce the spiritual knowledge which he has acquired by experience to compacter terms than are given in the teaching that there are three personal distinctions in the one true God.

Of course this means, it cannot help but mean, that God is in essence undivided; we do not "divide the substance." It also means that there is a threefold consciousness of self in him; we do not "confound the persons." That is to say, we do not mean to be chargeable with either of the opposite errors. It is likely enough that any attempt to state in detail what the doctrine includes will result in the dreaded confounding or dividing. So far as I can see, metaphysics can help us but a little way. I would prefer to say that God is one person, in the ordinary sense of the word. The Old Testament Scripture is at great pains to teach this, and it cost the Hebrew people much pain to learn it. No word in the New Testament relaxes the positive and energetic definiteness of this fundamental truth. But in some other sense, in the sense of self-consciousness without distinctness of substance, Father, Son, and Spirit are three in one. I do not think we can advance any further into this mystery. Nothing but compulsion of the reality which Christianity is could prevail to get the Trinity so far believed in. Every attempt to penetrate the mystery has shown how near, yet how exalted, are the limits of our knowledge.

Two well-known ideas have been resorted to, and pronounced orthodox, with a view to lay open the depths of the Godhead. Both of these are singularly overbold. Their audacity amounts to oddity; for they undertake to prove the Trinity from the very experience of

every man which supplies the sharpest objections to this high doctrine. One of these attempts is to use in its support the admitted condition of self-consciousness. I am conscious of myself only as consciously distinct from something else than myself. Now objectors to the Trinity have long been saying that God could not be conscious of three selves, because he is of one undivided substance. Yet the condition of human self-consciousness has been set up as a tall mast from which to peer into the heights of the divine psychology. God, we are assured, could be self-conscious before creation only as he found within himself a second and a third self which, without being separate in substance, could be distinct in conciousness. Much the same course is taken with the accepted doctrine that God is essentially loving. He could not from eternity love unless he is aware of a second, indeed also of a third, to whom his love can attach itself without breaking up his substance into three, or risking the real separateness in consciousness of the loving and the loved.

It has long seemed to me that when we have made out the existence of the Trinity, we may discern some dim corroboration of it along these lines, but that it is preposterous beyond computation to argue, in advance of other proof, for the essential triunity of the Godhead as a counterpart of anything within human experience, be that experience universal or distinctively Christian. Furthermore, while two in one could so distinguish and love each other, no need of three appears, unless it is a need which disparages the two. Why may not Father and Son communicate without the interposition of a third? Why not love without a third either to increase their mutual love or to guard them both from too complete mutual surrender? No real insight or explanation of the Trinity is afforded by this appeal to human self-consciousness and human affection. How can one

without misgiving say that the facts of human consciousness which forbid a man to be more than one person require God to be three persons? And how escape recognizing the limits of our knowledge in these attempts to explain?

Not seldom an appeal has been made to novel theories of science in support of the newer doctrines in theology. Perhaps in most of these cases the scientific theory is insufficiently proven, or the doctrine of theology generally repudiated. It would be along such a line of venture to seek explanation of the Trinity from the alleged evidences of dual or multiple personality which have been engaging the attention in particular of French students of hypnotism, hysteria, and insanity. In the hypnotic state what seems a wholly distinct personality recurs in some instances whenever that state is produced. Consciousness of the usual personality is lost; it is not supplanted by a personality which the operator suggests, but a self-suggested, *quasi* personality is resumed. In a few well-attested cases, not associated in any known manner with hypnotism, a man utterly forgets his name, his family, his occupation, his past life, and for a series of years leads a rational existence under a new name and with entirely new associations. Among these singular facts two of a general character are of chief importance to our inquiry: first, the facts cited are all morbid; secondly, the alleged shifting personalities are successive. This latter consideration might allow use to be made of the cases referred to in support of the modalism which denies concurrent tripersonality in the Godhead; but even as to such use of the facts it hardly need be added that a doctrine based on mental sickness must needs be a sickly doctrine. What could more effectually discredit an attempt at knowledge than to carry into the sphere of the divine and all-perfect the

phenomena of the imperfectly human? We best know on these matters that they are exalted above disease and oddity, even above knowledge. We see most clearly that the light is too dazzling for us to see in at all.

There are, however, two especially bold notions, so bold that one might venture to call them presumptuous if they had not enjoyed the support of asseverations innumerable from Nicea onward. The boldness of these notions is in their attempt to explain how God can be of one undivided substance and yet three persons. Their over-boldness is in their account of how these three personalities are produced. They are the well-worn theories of eternal generation of the Son and eternal procession of the Spirit. It was thought that if God from eternity to eternity begat the Son, Father, and Son could not become distinct. The process would never be at an end and complete. And because thus forever identical in substance, the Father and the Son, it is held, must be forever equal. Although such a process might seem to involve dependence of the Son on the Father, a corrective might be found in the fact that the eternal begetting was not the result of a volition by the Father, but of an imminent process, a process which belonged to his very nature. A process like that would seem to make the Father as dependent on the Son, as the Son on the Father. If there had to be a Father, there had to be a Son, and neither could exist without the other. Add to this mystery the eternal procession of the Spirit, and we have the authorized metaphysics of the accepted fact that three distinct persons constituted one undivided Godhead.

But why any authorized metaphysics? Would it not be enough to make Christianity responsible for the doctrine of three in one, without demanding that faith carry the burden of a metaphysics? Certainly the New

Testament ought not to be committed to either the support or the overthrow of these tremendous, if not trivial, speculations. No one of its writers intimates that he had in mind either eternal generation or eternal procession. It cannot be pretended that either theory existed at the time among Christians—making all allowance for the speculations of Philo. If no New Testament writer thought of either theory it is clear that he never meant either to favor or reject it. So distinctly speculative, so ultra speculative are these explanations of the Trinity that it is singularly inappropriate to attribute to unspeculative writers like those of the New Testament any attitude whatever on such issues. It is rarely safe, never fair, to say a man holds what seems to us logically involved in his avowed positions. He might deny the inference. He might stand to his position, although he did not know how to evade an inference which he could see was bad. When, therefore, the writers of Gospels or Epistles use expressions which could be interpreted in the sense of a given theory, but we do not know that such an interpretation was intended, it must not be made, we must not so appeal to these expressions. Such is the case before us. Christ is so often called the Son of God that this term is perhaps generally, and without reflection, taken to declare not the fact that God was Father of the historical Jesus, but of the eternal Word. One is not justified in finding so *outré* meaning as eternal generation while an intelligible alternative meaning is natural. Our Lord's historic name was Jesus; "his Son Jesus" Peter called him (Acts 3 : 26). His historic title was Christ. Consider how natural it would be to carry back the historical names without the historical meanings. We ourselves speak of "Christ" when we mean the preincarnate Word. Paul, in a notable passage (Phil. 2 : 5), called him Christ Jesus, although

he did not in the first instance regard him as the historic Christ at all. Christ was more than once called firstborn merely because first raised from the dead. With such examples before us, we should see how small warrant there is for taking the title Son of God to mean eternally begotten of God. He is called, to be sure, "the firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1 : 15); but Paul means by this title what he presently mentions, namely, "preeminence" (ver. 18), through precedence in existence and dignity. If he means more, what more? Can firstborn or first begotten possibly be the same as eternally begotten? The Arian notion of an origin in time before that of other creatures fits the term first begotten so much more closely as to make "eternally generated" seem unnatural, forced, and inapplicable. Biblical support constantly fails when we seek to penetrate the mystery of the Trinity by aid of a supposed eternal generation.

Turn now to the sole passage which speaks of the Holy Spirit as "proceeding from the Father" (John 15 : 26). Is it not all but whimsical to convert this casual phrase into a metaphysics? Let us keep in mind that every spiritual object wears the name of a physical object, and that to insist on the physical meaning as enough would blot out the whole realm of the spiritual; and from the point of view of these facts let us take up the phrase "proceedeth from the Father." Spirit first meant breath; did it at the last mean only breath? It could be pictured only as a proceeding by breathing; is that all it could actually do? This is the settled Old Testament way of referring to the matter; but to insist that the Holy Spirit is of its very nature breathed forth by God is to insist that the Spirit is only breath. It is to make him less than a divine energy, and less than the very inner essence and life of God, as a man's

spirit is to a man. It forbids not only identifying him with the being of God, but excludes all sense in which he can be thought of as personal. And it leaves with us what? An incredible and fantastic metaphysics. The metaphysics is incredible, because the Holy Spirit is nowhere represented in Scripture as amounting to so little as reducible to a breath or a process; it is fantastic, because to insist on a philosophy which undoes a fact is to make the philosophy, if not the fact, absurd. Theology can least of all pretend that such a course leads to any other knowledge than knowledge of how little we can know.

Whether or not we are satisfied that the ideas of eternal generation and procession are unavailable expositions of the Trinity on biblical grounds, there is an objection to these ideas which is even more pertinent, and still more significant of our ignorance. This objection is found in the inconsistency of the notions themselves with the much more momentous facts which they seek to explain. They lame the orthodoxy which they would support. And when we take into account that these notions did not get an explicit publication, to say the least of it, for some centuries after the New Testament canon was closed, such a fault is as bad as possible. When Origen gave to the church his fancy of the eternal generation of the Son, he saw plainly enough that his notion made the Son subordinate to the Father. The Nicene decree undertook to avoid this conclusion by defining the Son as "very God of very God." If his substance inhered in that of the Father, if he was *from* God only by being *of* God, this seemed to meet the requirement of equality between the divine persons. For it is obvious that in the All-perfect, the supreme Deity, there can be no inferiority. Yet derivation means dependence, and dependence means inferiority.

We cannot pass by the possibly yet more confusing and baffling fact that if the Son is from eternity coming into existence, never attaining complete existence, he thus indeed escapes being a second deity; but he also, it would seem, misses being a person. Forever becoming, never being, would quite shut out those conscious determinations of the self which the second person formed when he accepted his mission into this world, and which are not to be spared from any tenable and valid idea of him as a person in the Godhead.

If the theory of eternal generation seems inconsistent with the doctrine of triunity which it attempts to explain, it must, on the other hand, be admitted that the very offices characteristic of the three persons also involve inequality of functions. The Father is always the principal; the Son and the Spirit are always agents. We need not at this point inquire, as presently we must, what were the offices of the Son, because whatever they were, they were in all cases subordinate to those of the Father. We may even go so far as to say that it would involve an overturn of our ingrained faith too shocking to be believed, if we tried to fancy the offices of the three persons interchangeable. The three do, in point of reality, share with each other in office so far as to justify calling the Most High "the only wise God our Saviour" (Jude 25; cf. Titus 2 : 11), representing the Son as the one by whom and for whom all things were made and in whom all consist (Col. 1 : 16, 17), consoling the disciples by the Spirit's promised coming as equivalent to the coming of Christ (John 14 : 18; Rom. 8 : 9, 10), and declaring that the Lord himself "is that Spirit" (2 Cor. 3 : 17); yet none the less Father, Son, and Spirit have each their peculiar office. And they are unequal in office, although equal in essence. The essential equality may be *a priori* necessary, the official

inequality is a matter of fact. Can we justify our ineradicable conviction that the unequal functions could not be interchanged, but that the persons are equal? At least we cannot understand how this can be. If we are unable to imagine the Son sending the Father for our redemption, or the Spirit sending the Son for our sanctification, we cannot tell why not except on some theory of inequality between the persons which is inconsistent with fundamental Christianity. What we may claim to know should convince us how little we know, and what we have learned illustrates how much more there is to learn about the Trinity.

When we reach the farther verge of this period in which the early disciples anxiously asked what relations existed between God and Christ, and whether Christ were himself properly divine, as Jewish Christians were soon doubting, we find ourselves in the times of the New Testament itself. We mingle with the first Christians. We go with them to hear Paul tell what was news indeed—to some of them the good news. We listen again to the story of the deeds, the sayings, the sufferings, the rising of the Lord, as related by his companions, the apostles, who lingered as long as they were allowed to on the scene of these events. . . Whoever wrote the New Testament, whatever share the Spirit of God had in it, it represents the tradition of its day. As to this there is no dispute. Otherwise the book would not have been written. Our concern is with the beliefs of Christians in that earliest day, and the book as it stands opens insoluble problems on this point.

Giving the New Testament the credit which has generally been accorded, this will be only to find ourselves face to face with exegetical perplexities, to begin with, the solution of which may be as far away as a final decision on the problems of criticism. To take up

questions of this sort would illustrate, indeed, the limitations of our knowledge. Not to be able to interpret incontestably those simple writings would exhibit our ignorance plainly enough. But it would illustrate the limitations on our knowledge in a way which only special students of exegesis could be got to attend to, or could say anything about worth being recorded. The greater questions, those with which historic Christianity has been busied, the questions through a discussion of which we have approached the first Christian age, were in many cases started by the New Testament itself, and in all cases have been brought to its bar as a court of final appeal. Yet there remain scriptural problems not conspicuously canvassed by history. A glance at some of them will be sufficient. It will show us once more the limits of certitude with respect to the Redeemer of men.

In the pleasant autumn weather when one walks among the trees he may suddenly feel across his face the stout thread which a spider has stretched from tree to tree, or a very light and slender thread which the creature casts free upon the air, and goes floating on whither the breeze will carry it. The reader who saunters through the pages of the New Testament now and then becomes aware of an unwelcome problem like that persistent thread, and with some distinct annoyance may try to brush it from his face. But what if one should toss into the hazy and sunny atmosphere a little object to which light things would cling, a twig of gummy balsam, a sheet of paper wet with paste, and instead of seeing it fall, find it remain suspended and supported by unsuspected webs that fill the air, threading it up and down, and far and wide in all directions? The attentive reader of the New Testament may sometimes feel a surprise like this when he tries to make clear to his own mind the conceptions which its writers spun for themselves

concerning their Master and ours. They start a line in one direction, which we can see running out into the illimitable; but when we try to follow it we find it crossed by another line which leads toward a far different goal. And these distinct paths of thought, these white and glistening lines of view, are so interlaced and fastened that to make our way with determined step threatens to tear down the whole web. It seems so, and I believe it is so. Precisely what the writers of the New Testament thought of Christ, if they thought anything precisely about him, no sooner appears ready to be determined with the next step than that step is checked by a sharp cry of prohibition from the same writer. I do not know any theory so well devised by theological expertness or exegetical refinement that when all is said the theory does not look forced, and may not be found dragging upon its skirts some threads of teaching which it has torn from their native seat. They say there is a way of reeling and spinning the threads of spiders, and even of weaving from them a wondrous sheen of strong cloth which rivals the silkworm's familiar and costly gift; but no clever weavers have yet found out how to disentangle and wind up on theological bobbins the sometimes stout and strong, often delicate and dainty threads of the familiar New Testament teaching about our Lord.

One thing is clear: the New Covenant presents Christ as quite other than a mere man. Consider how freely this may be claimed. Scarcely a document in the volume fails to mark this as its writer's abiding thought. Hardly one of its books is so brief, or of topics so slight, as to give no hint that it represents a conviction to this effect among the followers of Christ in those days. Particularly ought we to notice that the more distinctly Christian one of these writings is, the more it exalts Christ. The three greater Gospels spread on their first page decisive

information that Jesus was in origin more than man, that he held to the Most High a relation mysterious, not yet studied, but believed in by all his disciples and disputed only by his enemies. How capricious, then, to claim a scriptural character for one's doctrine about him and yet reject from it, throw out of the record, or have to explain away the assurance satisfactory to strict Joseph that what was conceived in Mary was "of the Holy Ghost." How closely such an origin corresponds to the impressive personality of Jesus, who had only to call thrifty fishermen, and they "straightway left their nets and followed him." How suited to such a begetting the unique air of authority with which he taught. Who may ever venture to say with Jesus, "That ye may know I can forgive sin, I will do this miracle"? Or who dare announce, "All things were delivered to me by my Father," who else, unless there is some one else also at liberty to say, "No one knoweth the Son except the Father; nor does any one know the Father except the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal him"? The Master might, it would seem, shut out this man or that from the only knowledge of God; but was it not in keeping with all which was claimed for him that he at once added, "I will reveal the Father. Come to me all ye that labor and are heavy laden"?

These citations are from the Gospel credited to Matthew. Matthew's is an elaborate Gospel. Some scheme of thought pervades, some special purpose rules its selection and presentation of materials. We need not ask what is this particular purpose or scheme. It is enough that all thus far cited, such as the impressiveness of Christ, his categorical instructions, his right to forgive sin and power to work an attesting miracle, his astounding, but as it seemed to his followers, his justifiable pretension to have received from the Father, his Father, a

gift of "all things," to have exclusive knowledge of the Father, and a right to impart or withhold it—it is enough that, however Matthew is going to puzzle us, in all this the first Gospel certifies to the divinity of the Master's origin and the divineness of his life. Possibly we do not accept this certification; but it is given, and it exhibits the view taken of Christ not only by the evangelist called Matthew, but by Christians in general of Matthew's day. And if the book was written at a somewhat later date than scholarship now usually assigns to it, it no less represents the established opinion, the settled tradition of its time. What we know is that the people of the New Testament regarded Christ as divine. Our perplexities begin when we look into the Gospels to find what further was thought or not thought about him.

If only we accept the New Testament as an account of current tradition, the belief that Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit raises its own characteristic perplexity. The Jews held that before a man was begotten he preexisted in a germinal way. The sins of the fathers, as we can see, might naturally in this way be visited upon the children, and also the promises to the fathers hold good for a later generation. Such a belief might even give point to the Master's own reproach, "Ye are witnesses unto yourselves that ye are children of them that killed the prophets"; and certainly it is expressly declared when Levi is said to have paid tithes to Melchisedek while "yet in the loins of his father" Abraham. This supposed germinal preexistence was potential, not personal. Whenever personal existence begins, it does not precede the person's begetting.

But what did this customary view imply as to our Lord? If a potential, germinal, preexistence was ascribed to all human beings, what did those who followed Matthew's

account, those, that is, of whose faith the first Gospel is a record, understand to be the fact as to Christ's preexistence? Was it to their minds merely germinal and potential, or was it a personal preexistence? In other words, did they think Jesus began to be when any other child would begin to be, or that before any of his forefathers he was? This problem is not started by Matthew alone. It is a synoptic problem. For while Mark does not speak of the virgin birth, he makes Jesus "Son of the most high God"; and Luke, more particularly, by so much as his account of the virgin birth is fuller than Matthew's, by so much more opens to us the singular inquiry, What kind of preexistence did divine paternity imply in Jesus to those who accepted the synoptic account? Had they regarded Jesus as the son of Joseph, and his divinity as conferred in some other way than by a divine begetting, of course they would have understood that before his begetting he existed only potentially in Joseph, as Levi in Abraham; was then the case in this particular affected to their minds by the fact that not Joseph but God was the father of Jesus? In all other cases begetting meant a passing from potential to personal existence, the beginning of personal existence. Did they think that Jesus, unlike all human beings, had a personal existence before he was begotten? Of his generation by the Holy Spirit Matthew assured Joseph; of a sonship to God which should begin at a definite time the angel assured Mary. It was precisely because the Holy Spirit was to take the place of an earthly father that it could be added: "Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Did not Mary, therefore, and all who read the story, think of the personal existence of Jesus as beginning precisely when it would have begun had he been Joseph's son?

But if we suppose the synoptists and their readers knew of a *personal* preexistence of Christ, on what do we base this reading of their minds? For the Holy Spirit to give a definitive beginning to the personality of our Lord was no more than for him to beget our Lord. The mystery of the personal beginning is precisely the mystery of the divine begetting. Each act would naturally involve the other; each idea is incomprehensible precisely where the other is beyond comprehension. What justification can be found for thinking that those early readers of the synoptic account believed in any wider departure from the course of nature in the case of Jesus than the facts recounted call attention to? Surely the presumption is that they did not suppose Jesus to have personally existed before he was divinely begotten, unless for some other reason than the divine begetting, which meant beginning—some reason possibly of a theological sort, but decidedly not a matter of fact which has left its trace in the synoptic Gospels.

So far we understand, at least guess, the synoptist view as to our Lord was that he was a divine but not a personally preexistent Christ, the true Son of God, but not the eternal Word. It is a naïve view. It overlooks all metaphysical considerations, it neglects all *a priori* requirements in one who was truly God. But the existence of insoluble *a priori* problems is, as above noted, exactly a mystery of the divine begetting. The then current view of the origin of souls was in effect traducian; and so those first believers in the proper divinity of Christ apparently included in their belief that the divine substance extended itself into a new person, as that of earthly fathers does. If to the question, "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" the Pharisees replied, "The son of David," we know they did not think he had consciously existed in David; but if any

replied, "The Son of God," they none the more thought he had consciously existed in God.

This springs on us the startling question, What did the synoptists take it that Christ thought of himself? He knew God was his father. At the tender but intelligent age of twelve he himself knew, and supposed his parents not only knew, but considered well that God was his father. It is an often-renewed question how and when he came to consciousness of this fact, and what we have remarked as characteristic, unequivocally characteristic of the synoptists, merely cuts us off from supposing that they held him to have been consciously a divine person before he became a divine-human person. Of course this synoptist understanding of the mind of Christ does not exclude some profounder view; but it does forbid us to base such a view on the first three Gospels. Whatever else these are, they are not theological, not even thoroughly Christological. They deal with data, not with doctrines. They present the Master as a man; also indeed as divine, so that they do not supply humanitarianism with any legitimate argument; but they are equally as far from supporting the church doctrine of the Trinity. If we may infer from them anything as to the consciousness of our Lord, it must be that his knowledge of his relation to the Father may have been due to memory, to intuition, or to revelation. If to memory, this was perhaps memory of his mother's wonderful story of the annunciation, which almost certainly she had told him many a time. It could not have been recollection of his eternal, divine preexistence, for the synoptists knew of no such period for him to recall. He may have recognized his own divinity intuitively, as God knows all, and as an exceptional man sees himself, so to speak, face to face; but if so, the synoptists leave us to conjecture the occasions and rate by which our

Lord came to self-knowledge. If his proper divinity was taught him by special revelation, the occurrence of this lesson might be referred back by us, as long ago by others, to the baptismal scene, when what was revealed to his vision and hearing had a significance beyond what his boyhood knew or needed to know. I do not see that the synoptic story of his life leads into an understanding of the Master's self-consciousness, except as it leads away from possible recollections of a prenatal existence. It hardly needs to be mentioned how far Matthew, Mark, and Luke all are from affording a conception like Paul's of the existence of Christ Jesus in "the form of God," when he might count himself to be "equal with God."

So understanding the first three Gospels, those who read them, and correspondingly even Christ himself, must not we too accept their lesson? What that lesson is, though doubtful, need not be a matter of blind conjecture. These Gospels are not busied with the deepest and highest things. They are not theological; they deal with the actual. But for this reason the highest and the deepest which they tell seem the better assured. What Luke or Mark says, not John; what Matthew records, not Paul, looks like matter of fact; at any rate, looks more like it. On their pages Christ himself appears more real. This is perhaps to know him "after the flesh," but it is something to know him vividly. And so the very abatement of his claims in one particular expands them in another; to raise a question about him on one point is to put beyond question a more important point.

Such is, I think, the result of a thoroughgoing attempt to ascertain and accept the synoptic teaching. How much like truth, or rather how little like truth, would their story of Christ now seem if it set forth the orthodox account of the Trinity, with its philosophy of eternal generation and eternal

procession, all amply and authoritatively detailed to the simple reader? Is there even a theologian with but the scantiest historical sense, to whose imagination an account like this could figure as more than a complete, consistent, and splendid abstraction? Let us fully accept the church's doctrine of the Trinity as a compendious statement of all that is peculiar and fundamental in Christianity; and if it at all confuses us to dwell on this metaphysical aspect of so much truth, how impossible it would have been to think of it as more than truth, as reality, had the Bible offered that inside truth as part of the reality. It is certain that he who called himself "the Truth," because he brought all highest truth within reach and recognition, would lose his advantage and ours, would himself seem as insubstantial as the complete, mark you, and indisputable, mark you, trinitarian cloudland of verity with regard to him. Or suppose that the Gospel according to John had allowed every page to be occupied by the fathomless thought which it begins with; there would be no fording those pages, and few indeed would be the strong swimmers who could keep their heads above water from shore to shore of that great sea.

It is almost as certain that Paul, who is perhaps less profoundly theological than John, would have spoiled any gospel story which his pen might attempt unless he let his practical interest control the telling. It is not, then, clear loss, but in its way clear gain, that the three synoptists offer us Jesus as distinctly God's Son, yet absolutely without hint how we may comprehend the relations to God which that sonship involved. Let us not be frightened, let us be reassured, if the plain story of divine fatherhood contains a seemingly incongruous silence as to how Christ could have God for Father, and as to what he was before

he was generated a man. The more indifferent the synoptists are found to the question which had soon to occur to every one, the question as to what his relations to God involved, the more striking and decisive their insistence on the actuality of those relations. And there is no synoptic explanation, no problem even, no recognition that an explanation is wanted. We are but certified that Jesus appeared on earth as Son of God by spiritual generation, and the synoptists give no intimation that they meant us to believe, or themselves knew, that Christ existed as a divine person before he became divine-human. How distinctly they delimit what we learn from them.

That John and Paul regarded Christ as personally existent in the heavenly estate before his mission to earth is quite beyond question now. If neither Paul nor John tells of the virgin birth, this may easily be because they were so well assured of Christ's prenatal existence as not to be concerned with his nativity. But the fact that, while the synoptists turned toward his divine fatherhood, John and Paul looked to his divine preexistence, raises the question whether there were two parties, at least two opinions, on this subject among the earliest Christians. We do not know, and must remain contented not to know. At the same time, as Paul found in Ephesus some who had not "heard so much as whether there be any Holy Ghost," so it is not impossible nor improbable that his wide and searching vision of the nature and existence of Christ embraced a great deal that others learned from him, and could not otherwise learn. We may very well keep in mind also the possibly mediating position of Luke. Luke's expressed thought is just that of Matthew and Mark; on the other hand, he was the intimate associate of Paul. It is incredible that Paul did not know Luke's story of the incarnation, unless

Paul died before Luke became acquainted with it, and we cannot imagine that Luke silently rejected Paul's belief in the preincarnate glory of Christ. So far as Christian belief could be controlled by Luke, we may be confident that he would not be willing that an anti-Pauline party should build on his evangel.

John and Paul, in going far beyond where the synoptists left off, have started questions which the synoptists did not suggest. It may be true, I think it is so, that to them both their doctrine of the nature and prenatal state of Christ was as much sheer reality as to the synoptists was their own simpler story. Not as starting a problem nor as solving a problem does John tell us of the eternal "Word," or Paul of Him who was "in the form of God." For all the profundity of their doctrine, one cannot but be impressed with its naïveté, as the synoptists impressed us. They thought as men; but what they so thought they told of like children. This is the style and method proper to true prophets. They could not becomingly seem to be giving us the well-considered fruits of study; but they could fitly appear to convey with true heart and obedient mind a message from the Most High. What was the worth of any idea which John might work out concerning Jesus to what he *knew* about Jesus? What was Paul's undoubted penetration into "the deep things of God" to the unaffected story of what had been revealed to him from God? He was steward of the divine mystery. He knew this; he would assure us of this; but not with the mystic airs of a vested priest. For him there was only the joyous, high-souled, straightforward delivery of a priceless message for which mankind had waited long. Since that time Christians have tried to penetrate the secrets which he partly opened. The great problems of Christology have been due to the unproblematic teachings of John and Paul. We have

glanced at these as we traced backward the path of Christian thinking from our own day to the first Christian days. It is not necessary to go in detail over the same problems under the special form which the New Testament gives them. It will be enough to notice here and there by way of specimen the irresolvability of their New Testament phase.

The synoptists teach us that the Christ appeared on earth; John and Paul declare that he came from heaven. The synoptists do not consider whether he had a conscious preexistence; to Paul and John this is of high moment. But the silence of the synoptists does not imply any opposition to the statements of John and Paul. These latter, in turn, each presents the case in quite different aspects. John would have us know about Christ; Paul would have us know about his work. John gives us an ontology which is a prehistoric history of "the Word made flesh"; Paul shows how what the Son of God was to the universe was also a provision for the reconciliation of men (Col. 1 : 13-23). In John's view to know the true God and Jesus Christ was eternal life (17 : 3), and to believe was to accept the truth; to the mind of Paul Christ was our righteousness, and to believe was to accept Christ himself for justification. But both apostles start certain inquiries in common.

For example, if the synoptists raise the question how Christ entered into consciousness of his divinity, much more John and Paul do the same. They certify that he consciously existed as God before he existed at all as man. If, now, his earthly existence did not extinguish for the time-being his divine consciousness, how was that consciousness maintained? Is it possible that for the God-man infancy was not what it is for other men? Can it be that although as a child he seemed perfectly human, he was not genuinely human at all? Are we at

liberty to suppose that his recollections of his preexistent state ran back through babyhood, and made nothing of the utter blank or slowly dawning mentality of that period? We have to refer to Luke in order to find out what manner of boy Jesus was; and Luke tells us that he developed, and was "subject to his parents." This was a normal boyhood even for the Son of David. Is it not quite presumptuous to fancy that it included but a *pro forma* subjection, a mere pretense of dutifulness, which did not grow out of his childish needs, but had regard merely to "the proprieties" of his situation? Surely that would have been a false position quite open to the objections which John, who knew Jesus best, felt keenly, and which led him to denounce as anti-Christian any denial that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh.

So real, then, to John was the humanity of Christ as to leave it in question how he came to know himself as divine. Here also arises for the student of John the further question whether in the opening of his Gospel the Word that was with God, and was God, and made all things, in whom also was life and light, was to the mind of the evangelist personally distinguished from God. Two points John is careful to make clear: that the Logos was divine, and that he was an individual. To make his points he repeats them. That Christ was the Word means that he expressed God; that he was "with God" meant that he was close to God, means hardly less than the express statement which follows, "The Word was God." But that he was with God means also that he was an individual. Lest any doubt should be thrown on this point by the statement that the Word was God, it is at once repeated, "The same was in the beginning with God."

Was then the Word to John's view a divine person? This I dare not say. Singular as it may

seem to our way of thinking to make the Word an individual and leave his personality in question, singular notions of this sort were afloat, and it is far from possible to determine how to any one's mind individuality of the Logos or of wisdom allowed identity with God. Most of us feel assured that John here takes personality for granted; but it is certain that he does not affirm it. If the Logos was here thought of as possessing his own *quasi* personality, in which of these opening terms does John say so? In which does he intimate what such a personality was? After the doctrine of the Trinity had been defined no room was left for so indefinite ideas; but before the definition there was hardly room for any other ideas. Statements abounded which can be philosophized in no other way than a trinitarian way, but those who made the statements did not philosophize them. When the Word "dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father," then indeed his personality was evident. But if Jesus could claim a person's knowledge of things in heaven, it is as "the Son of man," who alone has ascended into heaven and descended out of heaven. Humanity made his divinity fully and expressly personal. When he says, "I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me," when in the same connection he adds, "Not that any one has seen the Father, save he who is from God, he has seen the Father"; when he startles the Jews by claiming the attribute of eternity, "Before Abraham was I am," it is so manifestly the personal God-man who speaks that he was not as manifestly thinking of himself as personal before he became man. If the eternal Word was but a mode of the Godhead's self-manifestation, then the Father's own personality would meet all requirements of the sayings quoted. In fact, we are unexpectedly

reminded of the synoptists' position. As to these evangelists no human being was a person apart from the mother element, so it would seem that Christ was to John a distinct person only through his union with human nature. I am not sure that even his prayer, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was," can be regarded as the utterance of a recollected, prenatal personality exclusively divine, as distinguished from a now complete divine-human personality. While John, it would seem, could not more explicitly make Christ divine and individual, strict exegesis may not guarantee that the eternally preexistent individual and divine in Christ had been from eternity personal. The likelihood is that while he recognized the deity of his Lord, John did not take up the question of prenatal personality in any trinitarian sense. With so indeterminate a doctrine on this subject passages would naturally occur in John which look in more than one direction. But modalism, *i. e.*, the absolute identification of Father, Son, and Spirit except in historical manifestation, is the only doctrine apart from trinitarianism which is compatible with John's thought.

John, like the other evangelists, leaves with us the question whether the miracles of Christ were wrought by an inherent or an imparted power. The consciousness on his part, elsewhere mentioned, that he was a source of healing "virtue," and the seeming ascription to him by the spectators of ability quite his own to do all his wonderful works, must be offset by his declaration, "The Son can do nothing of himself," and by his appeal, "Though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him." No complete solution has been found for this problem, although it involves the law of our Lord's life, if not the very constitution of his person.

In some form the evangelists agree that the character of the adult Jesus was disciplined by pain, as well as in childhood by subjection to earthly parents. Such a fact involves the close relation between powers and attributes unopposed and attributes or powers merely potential. Some cannot help feeling disturbed by the inevitable question whether the perfect, the mighty Christ, could be under any merely human need of discipline. Any answer satisfactory in one aspect is quite inevitably repulsive in another.

More trying still is the question how far this discipline extended. We know that Christ was tempted, and perhaps do not hesitate to believe that he was tempted as variously as men. But did he meet temptation as we have to, facing a possibility that he might yield to it? or, unlike us, was he calm in the assurance that for him sin would always be an impossibility? Why did he pray? Was he aware of needs? Were moral needs among these? Or with him was prayer only communion with God? If that is all, why may not then the fantastic notion which we used to hear be after all a true one, that the human in him prayed to the divine in him, at least to this extent, that for Christ prayer was only communion with himself? But surely more than this, far more than this enters our thoughts when we read that Jesus used to go apart to pray. The last century's studies made us face the fact that in a single particular at least the divinity of Christ was under limitations of the human; he admitted that he knew not the time of his own future return to earth. With no little reluctance many began to find indications that limitation in this instance illustrated a general fact. We cannot disguise it that human nature is as essentially limited as the divine nature at first seems to be essentially unlimited. However bold, then, the paradox, the divine could not enter

into hypostatic union with the human, a union which formed one person from two parent natures, without revealing powers distinctly divine, yet subject to limitations distinctly human. But by and by this limitation of our Lord became for us an illumination. It helped us to understand what had previously seemed inexplicable. And at last the question for us is simply as to the extent of the limitation. Did it go to the length of touching the moral nature of Christ? If so, how considerable was this effect? If God cannot be tempted, although Christ could be, might it not be possible for Christ to sin, impossible as this would be for God? Who knows? And if any one knows, what is the basis of his knowledge?

For the most unequivocal exposition of the doctrine of Christ we may have to resort, as for so much else, to Paul. With John the true divinity of our Lord was the ruling thought; but Paul, who did not leave the divinity of Christ in question, made his preexistent personality so plain as to raise quite different questions here and there from those suggested by John. The orthodox doctrine of the Trinity is a philosophy applicable to the statements alike of both apostles; but the alternative was by no means the same in both cases. So fully did John declare the Lord's true deity that if trinitarianism is not accepted, modalism must be; while so insistent is Paul on the prenatal personality of Christ that the alternative to orthodoxy is some form of high Arianism.

Let us bear in mind that while John is far indeed from neglecting the mission of Christ, and Paul from regarding as unimportant the deeps of knowledge concerning God which Christ sounds for us, yet John makes more constant reference to the truth of Christ, and Paul to the mission of Christ. This difference undoubtedly gives its special turn to the phraseology and even to the ideas of each when he presents our Lord's divinity. John

presents it to our wonderment and adoration, Paul to our wonderment and trust. But the divinity which is to be thought of as an object of trust is not for that reason less substantial than divinity which blinds us with its brightness. When Paul invokes grace and peace alike from God our Father and from Jesus Christ our Lord, as he constantly does, is not our Lord as distinctly deified in both function and nature as the Father? If the apostle can say, "The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death," is any reason left why he should not presently speak of the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ as the same (Rom. 7 : 2, 8)? If he has occasion to exalt Christ over the "thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers," or as he presently calls them, "angels," which young Gnosticism was already recommending the Colossians to worship, may he not dare to say that in Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 1 : 16; 2 : 9, 18)? It is hardly going any further when he gives to Christ outright the name of God, as he does, if we will allow him to finish his own antithesis in the well-known passage, "Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever" (Rom. 9 : 5).

And yet there is a singularity in some of the very phrases which openly assert the divinity of Christ; the turn of expression subordinates him whom Paul sets out to make supreme. If, for example, Christ is announced as "the fulness of the Godhead bodily," this is just after the Colossians have been told, "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell" (1 : 19); the divine *pleroma* might here seem to be a gift, not a native possession. Christ is often enough called by Paul the Son of God, but when, in that epistle which seems of special weight and authority, the Epistle to the

Romans, the divine sonship is to be settled on its proper basis, it is not quite clear whether Paul means that the resurrection of our Lord "declared" him to be the Son of God, that is, showed what he already was, or merely "instated" him as Son, that is, publicly conferred that rank upon him.

Of course we are not to overlook that Christ was and is human as well as divine, and that on this account he may be now presented in a way which would not be applicable before his incarnation. Possibly of this kind is the frequent Pauline reference to God as "God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"; and perhaps here too ought to go the unqualified assertion that "the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11 : 3). But here cannot go the statement as to the Preincarnate, that he is "the firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1 : 15). It may not be necessary to interpret "firstborn" as first created, but the word certainly does not mean, does not even look toward, eternal begetting. Firm believers in eternal generation may see in "firstborn" no more than precedence in time and rank. "Preeminence" is here distinctly ascribed to Christ. To this end he is even called "the firstborn from the dead"; but except as a net product of theologizing, a product reached by canceling out opposing factors, the representations of Paul seem to waver between ascribing to Christ deity or a divinity which is less than deity. Does he sometimes as good as put Christ in a secondary, if not subordinate place, before the incarnation, or does he steadily contemplate our Lord as then always "in the form of God" and "equal with God"? Is it quite clear what Paul would say in reply to the questions which we would like to ask him on these points, and which have made themselves heard from time to time in all the Christian centuries? If it is correct to say that Paul tells us the

most of what we know about these things, has he not left us in ignorance not only of much which he does not undertake to tell, but also as to precisely with what ideas he did seek to enlighten our minds?

No attempt has here been made to bring to the front the unanswerable questions which all the New Testament writers have left with us, nor even to notice all those of the evangelists, and the two foremost apostolic writers. Illustration has been offered of the fact that the common faith of Christians about Christ is checked by limitations on our verifiable knowledge as to the most momentous and dearest theme, precisely at points where we are best assured, and alike in all generations from the present back to that in which the Master walked the earth. But there would have been no Christ had there been no mission for Christ. To the issues about the former correspond issues about the latter. And more also. With identical belief as to what he was are found widely divergent views of why he came. The discussion of these views, having once fairly begun, seems interminable. But this is because it is not possible to place beyond dispute any complete account of why Christ came. We need, or think we need, to know why, yet here too our knowledge is as limited as anywhere.

2. His Offices

I am not about to attempt proving what the office of the Redeemer is, but to show that it involves the inexplicable, whatever it is. This office has been defined for all generations thus far by Paul, so far, that is, as the generations have been in accord. No sign appears that the generations yet to come will break away from the teachings of Paul on this vital matter. Common as it has become to call us back from Paul to Christ, and even to announce that this step has been finally taken,

it has been taken, if at all, only by certain scholars. The belief of the people as to the office of Christ remains Pauline. It would be a measureless misfortune if this were not so. In the first place, that Christian faith in all generations has followed a false guide would be an incalculable misfortune; and in the second place, the teaching and work of Christ require much fuller statement than he himself supplied. If he was followed by no authorized exponent, the data concerning him, wherever given, were left in all but the last need of interpretation. How staggered his disciples used to be at every attempt before his passion to let them into the secret of his coming and to tell what presently awaited him. He indeed asked them to believe that after these predictions should be fulfilled, then could be understood what his nearest intimates could not now understand. And yet this was not fully the case so long as he was at hand to explain everything. He "opened their mind," we are told, "that they might understand the Scriptures," and how it was written that the Christ must suffer and rise, and "remission of sins be preached in his name to all the nations"; but that this was more than a predicted need, or why it had to be predicted, or on what ground remission of sins could be offered in his name, all this it was not in the nature of the human mind to take in at once; nor do we know that Jesus attempted to tell them all this. But this, if not precisely and exclusively the gospel, is the unfolding of the gospel, of its need and its nature. It was of ultimate importance that some one know and let the world know more than Christ succeeded in getting his immediate followers to learn from his own lips and life. To work out and state the nature of Christianity was the incomparable, inestimable service which fell to Paul. And this he so effectually did for the church and the world that the world

as well as the church has accepted what he taught as all one with the truth as it is in Jesus. It falls to us to note what perplexities he started and left.

(1) Revelation

It was imperative that whatever is essential to the offices of Christ should be made plain; it is certain that they involve not a little which is essentially obscure. Summarily they were two, revelation and redemption. We are already prepared to find that with John revelation is redemption, and that with Paul redemption is revelation. Our special concern is with so much of revelation as in the view of both apostles, by the Christian experience of many generations, and with the penetrating study and widening light of the present age, covers common ground with redemption. Otherwise the entire field of Christian thought, instead of the distinctive work of Christ, would have to be surveyed from this point.

The sum of the Christian revelation is its doctrine of God; the sum of its doctrine of God is that he is holy love. For ages Christianity set love and justice in conflict, with love in the ascendant; but the characteristic opinion of our age notices no conflict because it disregards divine justice. The mysterious relation of what we know to what we cannot know on this high theme comes to view when we attempt to accord to every attribute of God its rights. What does love seek for any being? That which is well for him. What does justice demand for any one? That which is fit for him. These coincide. They are even identical. If the only fitting thing for a man is that what is well for him should befall him, the only thing well for him is that which is fit to him. Why should not God be as just as he is kind? Is not one attribute as imperative, and one relation to him as desirable as the other?

While this seems to be fact beyond dispute, its consequences are bewildering. If love provides redemption for man, justice would seem equally to exact it. This is because redemption can be possible only to beings for whom its provisions and its fruition are suitable. And if these are suitable, it would be unsuitable to omit them. Yet to say that redemption is due from God's grace, that justice claims love, is to say that redemption is no longer of grace, but of debt, and that too of divine debt toward sinners. Possibly we may be able to see how suitable to the character of God it is to redeem sinners, and how suitable it is to sinners to be redeemed—how suitable to them in all but this one particular, their ill-desert; but it is assuredly a strange conception of Christianity which vindicates the goodness of God by annulling the gratuitousness of the grace which is the basis of our faith that he is good. The facts are clear; the problem remains.

But a still greater perplexity in the Christian revelation of God is involved. Conduct cannot be without consequences. Can sinful conduct? And must not its consequences be as damaging as sin itself is? What conception of right and wrong, of the normal and the abnormal, of the seemly and the unseemly, does he possess whose own consciousness is unwhipt of the justice that renders to every man that which is fit? Is the sinner as admirable in his own eyes as the innocent? Must not bad consequences of his badness form themselves within him? And can sin help affecting one's relations to other moral beings? Are the vile in the slums as pleasant and congenial to us as the good anywhere? Pitiable for the depth of their vileness, are they not the more detestable because the evil is so great and so ingrained? Must not the whole train of harm which a wicked life actually draws after it follow it quite of necessity? And

is it all one to God whether we are good or bad? Are not our relations to him affected in any way by our moral quality and our actions? No unsuitable result is to be looked for; but approval of a sinner, or indifference, or neutrality as to his sin, would be an unsuitable result. Divine dislike and displeasure are alone suitable, except as detestation of sin leads to divine compassion and endeavor to deliver the sinner. But, then, conversely it must be, though how can it be, that any abhorrence by God for sin is as well for the sinner as it is fitting? Should any permanent ill ensue, this must be regarded as a fruit of God's love, just as unequivocally as of his justice. What is well is precisely what is fit. One is reminded of the old preachers who used to say that an impenitent sinner would be more miserable in heaven than in hell. It is at least the case that if the love of God leads to a fitting provision of benefits, a fitting provision of penalties is acceptable to the love of God. But I think we must regard this as one of those profound mysteries which have their roots in the very nature of the beings concerned, and which cannot be resolved, because the inner natures of things and ultimate ideas are partly inscrutable.

(2) Redemption

The redemption which it was the office of Christ to provide has been credited with remission of sins, with deliverance from sin, and with spiritual life in Christ. When any one or all of these priceless gains have been alleged, it seemed appropriate to Christ, and known to Christian experience. And yet what he did to effect such results, and how what he did was or could be effectual, has been so much in dispute as hardly to fall short of denying the results, and in some instances has actually led to such a denial. If what is commonly called the

Atonement could be understood, if an agreed exposition and explanation of it were ours, that great service would be accepted as ours also. It is controversy which has clouded the facts; it is theology which has discredited religion. One is reminded of a disability which rests on evolutionism as a doctrine of biology; its advocates cannot agree whether new species are due to native tendency toward variation, or to inheritance of acquired characteristics. But Darwinian and Lamarkian still agree that the organic species are evolved. It has not occurred to the advocates of evolution, although it has been pressed by many of its enemies, to erect a difference of opinion as to the process into an argument against the natural origin of species. Objections to one theory invariably suggest another theory, and the critical process will go on until, as evolutionists expect, the elimination of methods by which evolution could not take place will lead to discovery of the method by which it did occur. Theories of redemption have as natural a relation to each other, and are at least no more fatal to the reality of redemption.

If we look to Paul, who is the actual source of Christian beliefs on this subject, it will now be agreed by scholars that we shall find him identifying redemption with remission of sins, with deliverance from sin, and with life in Christ. We may be cautioned not to believe with Paul, but we shall hardly any longer be told that he did not teach the common doctrine. We shall also beyond question find Paul attributing these results to the crucifixion, to the resurrection, and to the regnant life of our Lord; but we shall not find him explaining how these supreme events were redemptive; that is, to what they owe their redemptive efficacy. Yet this is the precise theme of the endless discussion, and when we know most about it, this is one of those matters about which we know the least.

Rival accounts follow each other as naturally as possible, although perhaps at wide intervals of time. It cannot be regarded unnatural that, in an age when a victor in battle might take the life of his captive, hold him for ransom, or use him as a slave, Satan should be regarded as the owner of sinners, and entitled to a ransom, if any captives were to be released. We might wonder how Satan could be so ill informed about the spiritual dulness of the human heart, or fear so extravagantly the example of Jesus, as to fancy that his captives would run away into the practice of righteousness, unless he had made the mistake, before Abelard, of adopting the moral influence theory of atonement; but since Jesus, according to his own teaching, was to give his life a ransom, it was not unnatural, however unseemly, to take for granted that the ransom was paid to the enemy.

Yet a thousand years after Origen elaborated the theory of ransom it was just as natural that Anselm should refuse to credit Satan with any rights over sinners, and should propose a virtually new idea, should hold sin to be an outrage against the majesty of God, a debt to the divine honor, should explain that the Son of God became the God-man, according to the code of chivalry then prevailing made common cause with men, and as of equal rank with God, offered himself in satisfaction for sins. And yet when God was represented as so vindictive, if not so haughty a Being, it was natural that an Abelard, with whom love, however ill regulated, was a predominating interest, should declaim with winning eloquence against Anselm's representations, and urge that it was man, not God, that needed to be propitiated. Nevertheless, the generations since Anselm and Abelard, knowing that we are sinners, and fearing just punishment for our sins, have never entirely withdrawn

our welcome from the teaching that the Son of God satisfied the claims of God by some kind of propitiation for human sinfulness.

But now, and most naturally too, the unsolved problem arose, what was the propitiation, and what was its merit? The crucifixion was certainly part of the propitiation, perhaps the active obedience of Christ was another part; and the propitiation, whatever or whomever it affected, ought always to be thought of as provided by the love of God. Indeed, in a large proportion of texts, not in all, it is so presented. Although a propitiation of God himself would hardly seem to be needed if provided by himself, yet it cannot be disguised that the New Testament so represents the actual situation. Is any word in the good news better known and better understood than that Christ made a propitiation for our sins? But is any word better known and *less* understood than that God, who was to be propitiated, himself made the provision? He must be already propitiated when he provides the propitiation; yet the propitiation must still be needed or he would not provide it. It was as when long ago Abraham had said to Isaac, "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering"; but it was not as then God provided a ram in the stead of his Son. How much and how little we know as to the God-given propitiation of God.

We know, however, that God must be consistent in this matter; but how? The sinner is offensive to him, yet is sought after. The sinner owes reparation to God, and it is God who helps him pay the debt. Even we are more clearly consistent. To accept Christ as a sacrifice for the remission of our sins is to become ourselves a living sacrifice, and to abandon sin. It is a rational service, rationally provided for. The second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews ends with a unique representation of the Godward and the manward offices of Christ, in their

extreme form, duly joined together: "Wherefore it behooved him in all things to be made like his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted." It could not be more explicitly stated that the pertinence of the high priesthood of Christ is Godward, exclusively Godward (*τὰ προς τὸν θεόν*), and that what it effects for man is a propitiation. Yet it is just as explicitly stated that the condition on which he could be the high priest of God was a condition of being the helper of men. Christ was a high priest because in all things he was made like his brethren; but in sharing his brethren's lot he bore their temptations and brought them succor.

The passage just quoted offers, in effect, what was the earliest answer to the question how the work of redemption could avail anything either Godward or manward. What the Redeemer himself did and what others did to him must be allowed to pass as though it had been done either by us or for us. In other words, his office was vicarious. The Redeemer was the Representative. In place of satisfaction we now mostly see substitution. This substitutionary, representative, or vicarious relation was grounded in the fact that Christ was both divine and human. "In all things he was made like his brethren." It was a realized reconciliation and union of God with man. It was so on the surface; was it so beneath the surface? "The man Christ Jesus" was the one only God united to one man. How did this union avail for any other human being than himself? A not unnatural reply is that the grace of God would have it so, that the Father made a covenant with Christ, according to which everything in Christ that could normally avail for himself graciously availed for the elect. If

a scheme like this would seem to justify itself to those who believe that God had any elect, it won little favor with those who could not so limit the redemptive love of God. God's love was for the world; redemption was for every man who could be saved without overturning the government of God. But this scheme of divine politics, like the provisions of a covenant, was a fruit of contrivance and discretion. It was too artificial to seem real. The representative relation, on the contrary, which theologians were now looking for, should be too radical to be a contrivance. The inquiry was, did relations of being to being, of Christ to mankind, exist which at least allowed him to stand in our place, and even made it impossible that he should vacate that place? Such a relation is thought to have been discovered in either the unity of the human race, or—a view of late perhaps growing into favor—in the thoroughgoing dependence of mankind on the eternal Word before his incarnation. According to the former view there is a solidarity of men which, when Christ comes among them, makes him one with all the rest. The evils which attach to our race thus fall upon him, and the benefits he provides, he provides for one and all who will not reject them. But it has been far from clear to all minds not occupied by a realistic philosophy how Christ could thus incur the ill results of human sin, how all mankind virtually bears on the cross of Christ the penalty of its own sinning, and having exhausted that penalty, has no more that it must bear. But if such a possibility is not obviously an actuality, others have found in the fact that the Word was our creator, upholder, ruler, and the final cause of our existence, a revelation so deep and wide that it was only short of identifying mankind with its Maker, and assuredly gave him verge and privilege to undertake for men all that he inclined to do.

But when we have accorded the largest possible credit to schemes of substitution—it might almost be called "identification"—and especially, as it seems to me, when we have allowed most weight to those theories which settle the atonement on relations that exist irrespective of the atonement; that is, when we seem to penetrate farthest into the connection of God's very being with ours, as well as comprehend best his great grace toward us in Christ Jesus, it is precisely then that we face the never-solved, never-evaded difficulty, that persons are the most completely distinct of all existences. Whatever belongs to one person as a person cannot conceivably belong to another person as such. Persons are like cannon-balls; they can touch, but only at one point. At that point they can communicate enormous energy, if it is in either of them; but neither can pass into the other without breaking both. Persons may be in perpetual touch, but never take each other's place. And so, however ample the ability of Christ to assume vicarious relations, and however confident we may not unjustly become that we can trace this ability back to preincarnate facts, the question is as little answered and as remote from an answer as ever, how even Christ can act in our place and work redemption for us, except by appeal to motives which move ordinary hearts and control minds susceptible to ordinary human ties. The substitution whereby Christ is believed to have procured remission of sins no doubt existed; but equally beyond doubt, it is beyond understanding. What Paul calls justification is substitutionary, and a large part of the gospel, but is a fundamental mystery of it.

Yet the motives which are adequate to move ordinary hearts and control average minds are entirely sufficient, if awakened, for the second great element in redemption; namely, deliverance from the power of sin. It is not

here necessary that Christ should take our place. Every motive by which personal love and loyalty can be won may be employed to deliver the follower of Christ from the power of sin. "If ye love me, keep my commandments," said Christ; and to love him is a sufficient and quite intelligible motive for obeying. Love is the fulfilling of the law. Here is no mystery. What we know about the matter we also understand.

But while ordinary motives, if strong enough, can deliver a man from sin, this second element in redemption may be due to the third element, to wit, life in Christ. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus set me free from the law of sin and death." When we consider the motives to which life in Christ gives strength and efficiency, how simple they are; but when we consider life in Christ, how unfathomable the mystery of it is. Merely to love Christ loyally is to obey him faithfully; but his own life in us may mystically bind us to himself. Not that in all cases the phrase "To live in Christ," or "Christ lives in me," is puzzling or uncertain. The form of expression may itself be highly enigmatic, yet its meaning entirely clear, or the language may be simple, and its meaning occult. Thus when Paul writes, "To me to live is Christ," he almost seems to propound a riddle; but his idea is only that his mind is so taken up with Christ that he lives for nothing else. Thus to the Philippians. But to the Colossians and to us what transcendent depths and heights are couched in the artless phrases, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

Not a few are inflexibly averse to all mysticism in their religion. The Ritschlians are so. They will accept so much of truth as they find useful, and no questions asked. Explanation of underlying or outlying mystery

would have for the Ritschlian the value of science only and not of religion. But the confident exclusion of all mystery is wholly wanting in New Testament example. It is not for Paul alone to say, "I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me," or for John to record, "In him was life." Even the Master himself said, "I am the life," "Abide in me, and I in you." When we read of Christ in us we may balance long between the ideas that this is but a winsome figure of speech and that it is a bold assertion of reality. But when one is disposed to deny that there is in any case a mystical union of Christ and his brethren, an impartation by him to them of a spiritual reality worthy to be called life, let him consider well what else his denial sweeps away. Christ is the agent in all God's major activities with the universe. For though there are gods many and lords many, unto us there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him.

Whoever can grasp the fact that it is the Redeemer of mankind by whose agency God does everything to the cosmos which he has to do, to him it will be easily credible that Christ does something toward maintaining spiritual life in his people, if even by directly imparting somewhat of his own spiritual energy; while to be incapable of affording a spiritual aid so natural and so dear would invite and require a revolution in the divine government. The Son of God would vacate his vice-regal throne. But how does he support either a natural or a spiritual life? Is he the vital principle of all organisms? Is he such to all believers? If the answer is yes, what does vital principle mean? Does it mean the imperishable vitality by which Christ maintains his own existence? And must we take up with the singular notion that Christ literally imparts of his life? And is there, or may there be, a continuous

addition to the substance of Christian souls from the substance of Christ? Something like this is believed by those who hold with Peter literally that we may "become partakers of the divine nature." But for the majority of thoughtful Christians it will always be a question without an answer precisely what it is to live in Christ. His redemption cancels past offenses, and we may well wonder how; "breaks the power of canceled sin," and we may not know in what way "he sets the prisoner free"; it culminates with life in Christ, but who can explain it? When we know our Master best we may understand his methods least. And however narrow the limits of our knowledge of him, this at least we may perfectly know, that Christ Jesus is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." It is at once the least and the utmost which can be known.

VI

THE PARACLETE

VI

THE PARACLETE

ON this high theme the New Testament furnishes copious information, yet leaves us with a marked want of knowledge. Both the knowledge and the want of it are of the first importance. How can I know the Holy Spirit? has been a pressing question since the Spirit was first given to believers. It was so easy to mistake any extraordinary impulse for impulsion by the Spirit, so natural to act wildly under such an impulse, so feasible for Satan himself to mislead the unwary, that discernment of spirits was conferred as a special gift on some, and the Epistles gave rules for the guidance of all.

[1] From that early day any who greatly desired to be guided by the Holy Spirit, or believed that they received especial help from him, have been apt to make him responsible in certain cases for ideas and acts hardly short of madness. Indeed, it is safe to say that fanatical excesses are quite invariably associated with a mistake about the Holy Spirit. In our own day, comparatively clear as we are of a tendency to fantastic behavior in the name of the Holy One, the considerate pastor cannot but be aware that a proper revival of interest in this high theme or of longing for this high gift is going to make it correspondingly important to distinguish between what we know and what we conjecture on the entire matter. Many excellent people resent the good pastor's cautions. General meetings, such as daily union prayer meetings, tend to fall into the hands of zealots

[1] Some of these remarks were contributed by the author to the "Religious Herald," of Richmond, Va.

whom few hesitate to call "cranks." Devout and sensible persons are sometimes haunted by a dread lest they resist the Holy Spirit when they shrink from doing what they feel mysteriously impelled to do, and what every other consideration except dread of grieving the Spirit warns them not to do. If they had known that they do not know, a worse than misunderstanding now and then might have been avoided.

Frightful evils have been perpetrated with a good conscience. From Saul of Tarsus, who made havoc of the church, to Philip II. of Spain, who devoted millions of Protestants to death, the worst was made possible only by an ignorance which thought itself knowledge. Two problems which never reach a settlement permanent and satisfactory to all are the problems of the personality and the work of the Paraclete.

1. His Personality

Of all Christian doctrines that concerning the Trinity is the most highly speculative, and should be the most accurate; and of all elements in the doctrine of the Trinity that of the Spirit's personality is most ineffable, and might well be the boldest. If in the Godhead there is held to be a third person, the reason for so holding ought to be peculiarly convincing. Yet this can hardly be regarded as the case, whether we consult the Old Testament, the New Testament, or religious experience. The consciousness of selfhood is the core of personality; but why need the Holy Spirit be preeminently conscious of himself in order to help other persons, divine or human? He need not be. The Father and the Son may commune together without conscious interposition of a third person in the Godhead. God may in like manner communicate with human beings, all without recognition by them that he is not only the personal

Godhead, but also a special person in a triune deity. We may close the question as we ask it: Is it possible to distinguish the Holy Spirit as a self-conscious personality in three? and the answer must be No. He is a personality; he is a self-conscious personality; he may even be conscious of himself as one in three; but we, to whom he is the Comforter, have no need nor means for making such a distinction part of our theological or experiential knowledge.

2. His Work

The easiest way to torment a good Christian is to leave him in doubt as to his spiritual obligations. The perplexity may be lessened by dividing the question. The question, How can I know the Holy Spirit and his work? falls apart into three: (1) What sign of his presence is possible? (2) What sign would be hurtful? (3) What would be helpful?

1. By what signs is it possible for the Holy Spirit to notify us that he and no other spirit, he and not our own spirit, is imparting an idea or prompting an action? By a miracle he can present the form of Christ to the eye or his voice to the ear, as when Saul of Tarsus both saw and heard the Lord near Damascus. But unless in our case, as in that of Saul, others hear or see, a mere impression on the senses would not furnish any means of distinguishing a miracle from an hallucination. It is possible for the Holy Spirit to impress an idea or an impulse upon our spirits; but the unexpectedness, sharpness, unaccountableness of the mental impression all fail to assure us that it does not come from an evil spirit masquerading as an angel of light, or as more than a freak of our own minds. Those who study the nervous system know how easy it is to mistake fancied for real sight, sound, smell, taste, or

feeling; so those who study the mind know how liable the minds of all, how exceedingly liable the minds of some are to odd and inexplicable but absolutely self-begotten notions and impulses. The actions of domestic animals and of little children are largely controlled by these whims of intelligence or freaks of feeling; and it therefore follows that it is correspondingly impossible for the Holy Spirit to assure us by the merely unaccountable character of an impression that the impression comes from him.

A further answer of very great importance can be given; it is impossible for any man to distinguish the act of the Holy Spirit, or of any other spirit from the act of his own mind. It is always the man himself that thinks or feels. He is never aware of any other personal spirit thinking or feeling in his own brain or breast. This is of the utmost importance, because some fancy that certain of their thoughts and feelings can be recognized as suggestions of a spirit other than their own. It is a conceit at the bottom of all mistaken conceits as to inspiration, and of half the perplexities that good Christians feel about "the leadings of the Spirit." Only a moment's reflection should be needed to make it plain that one's own self does all the thinking and feeling of which one is conscious. Some other spirit, evil or good, may start him upon the thought or desire; but the act of such a spirit is back of consciousness always. And so, whether Satan or our own lusts suggest a temptation, whether the divine Spirit or a good angel, or our own holy longings prompt a right idea, we can never find out by distinguishing our own spirit from another spirit within us. The only means by which the Holy Spirit can certify himself to us must remain as uncertain as the nature of the idea or feeling itself. It is the sort of test which the New Testament

provides, and it leaves the degree of ignorance which the New Testament does not remove.

2. What signs of the Holy Spirit's presence would be hurtful? Or rather, what fancies must be excluded, since no really hurtful signs from the Spirit are conceivable? As a rule the answer must be, any signs or tokens which do not commend themselves to an enlightened conscience, that is, to sound reason. This is of importance to those in particular who feel that the Holy Spirit bids them do this or that which there is no motive for doing except the morbid feeling of being unaccountably driven to it. This is how the insane act. This is the way fanatics shame our religion. This is how Quaker women in days long gone were led to rush naked through the public streets. It is how a servant of the Spirit, as he held himself to be, was led, as the story goes, to pull the bell of an uninhabited house, that he might "talk religion" to the people whom he fancied lived there; how another such person is known to have poured urgent appeals into the ears of a passenger whom the Spirit pointed out to him on a Jersey City ferry-boat, only to find the passenger stone deaf. It is how so many in the Spirit's name are dumb at prayer meeting, or more hurtfully vocal, when sound sense would discern reasons enough either for speaking or keeping silence; and how in the Corinthian church there were real prophets who needed to be warned by Paul that "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace." Good sense, mere reverence, might have taught them as much; but they imagined, doubtless, that to hearken to reason would be to resist the Spirit.

Let us not fail to note that the impulses which men filled with the Spirit then felt were sometimes to be resisted. "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." Certainly here is a clear hint against

supposing that all even of our right impulses are to have free rein. Good spirits may draw, but reasonableness ought to drive. Plainly this was the case in Corinth; unless it is provided for to-day we shall need another Paul to set us right. There is conduct then which does not approve itself to a good conscience. There are notions not commendable to sound reason. It would be hurtful to accept them as signs of just what the Holy Spirit would have us do or think. Here we know very little and need to know very much.

3. What helpful signs can the Spirit give that he is stirring our hearts, inciting our wills, guiding our thoughts? We must look to the nature of the signs. When the unregenerate are convinced of sin, of righteousness, or of judgment, they may well thank God that the Holy Spirit is performing the office for them which Jesus foretold. Ending there, it will be what perhaps Jesus had in mind, an office of condemnation solely; but thus the saving offices of the Spirit must begin. And as to the world these offices have reference to Christ himself, so to the church his office is to take the things of Christ and show them unto us. Paul accordingly made the honoring of Christ by the Spirit within us a test that the Spirit in us was holy. And if assured of the witness by the Holy Spirit to our spirits that we are children of God it was not to be independently of holy fruits from the Holy Spirit. John prescribes it as an express test by which to "try the spirits" that they must confess to the truth about Jesus Christ, while he makes the witness to our own sonship consist in the witness within us to Jesus as the Son of God.

If any one says he has really meant to honor Jesus in all the queer things he feels impelled to do, obviously this is not enough. He must honor Jesus sanely and in fact as well as in wish. Those who denied that Jesus

had more than the semblance of a man fancied that they honored him most of all; but it was of these that John wrote, "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is . . . the spirit of Antichrist," and so our ideas are not of God unless they are according to all that the Bible has taught us.

Surely, then, we are not to look for the Holy Spirit's guidance in sudden, strange, questionable ideas or impulses. What we need is that he help us to keep our hearts clean, our wills fixed upon God's known will, our minds ever at home in sacred things, and progressively enlightened, not by fancied discoveries, which are but idle whims, but by fuller grasp of the common treasure of truth. This may be disheartening to those who like to count themselves leaders through the Spirit's especial gift to themselves of truth that no others have found; but it will be a priceless encouragement to men of sober mind, who would fain follow the leadings of the Spirit, yet dread the effect of self-abandonment to thoughts and impulses which cannot find any justification in either the gospel or the law.

To the question what helpful signs the Spirit can give that he is guiding our minds, is it not safe to reply as follows? There is no good reason to believe that either the form or the voice of the Lord is miraculously presented to the senses in these days; yet the Holy Spirit may use the delusions of the ignorant for their help. He may perhaps impress us with the conviction that we ought to do what we can see no reason of any sort for doing. Yet in all these cases, and in all cases imaginable, we can be sure it is he only by the wisdom and holiness of the ideas, feelings, and purposes that animate us; while what above all things we need is that which alone we can be certain of, not that we distinguish in our breasts his motions from our own, but

that our own understandings are cleared, our own aspirations lifted up, our own affections warmed, consciences aroused, right purposes fixed, by that Spirit through whom alone God works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.

VII

THE FUTURE

VII

THE FUTURE

CHRISTIAN agnosticism finds its largest field in the discussion of the doctrine of Last Things. Less certainty rewards inquiry here than in any other department of Christian truth. Data that are attested by historical evidence, or by physical observation, form the basis of the doctrine of God, and of anthropology and soteriology. At every step of investigating the doctrines of the inner world of self, and the outward world of things, the work of redemption, and the Scriptures, we are able rigorously to test the accuracy of our results by Christian experience. But practically the only source of eschatology is prophecy as yet unfulfilled. Science, which floods with light objects immediately about us, seems, like a torch in the hand, to deepen the darkness over things far away. In like manner prophecy is obscure in proportion as the events to which it relates recede into the distant future. For this obscurity there are some recognizable causes:

First, some of the topics of prophecy lie beyond the range of our present experience, and therefore are necessarily incomprehensible. We know nothing of a spiritual body, for example; nor can present knowledge or experience enable us to comprehend the intermediate state or the second advent of our Lord.

Secondly, obscurity may be a necessary safeguard. The obscurity of the prophecies regarding the Messiah was a real, and perhaps an intentional safeguard against imposture. It certainly prevented the success of any false Christ. The same is true, and perhaps in a higher

degree, of the Christian predictions. Our Lord told his own disciples that they could not understand his predictions until they were fulfilled, and that these should then serve as his credentials. When has prophecy of a distant event been correctly interpreted in advance? Some great lesson has been learned from it, but just those details that seemed most clear have been disastrously misunderstood. Every reader of the New Testament knows how calamitous was the failure of the rabbis and scribes to override this precaution in the case of predictions about the first coming of the Messiah—how widely the Messianic hope and the Messianic doctrine of the generation of Jesus differed from the reality. How plain to the Jews of our Lord's day that the Old Testament predicted a temporal Messiah! So plain that they rejected the Messiah when he came! This should warn us against similar attempts to interpret outstanding prophecy. A great deal of prophecy remains unfulfilled. Interpreted with our present light, unfulfilled prophecies seem to contradict each other. Here, if anywhere, agnosticism is Christian, and the only wisdom.

Thirdly, prophecies seem in part contingent upon what men do. Nineveh repented, and the prophecy of her destruction remained unfulfilled. Jerusalem would not receive her King, and in spite of the glory and perpetuity promised, her house was left unto her desolate. The New Testament seems to teach that the return of the Lord may be delayed or hastened by the church. Thus in his exhortation to the people after the healing of the lame man at the gate Beautiful, Peter said: "Repent ye, therefore, and turn, that your sins may be blotted out, in order that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you (even) Jesus; whom heaven indeed must receive, until the times of

the restoration of all things, which God spoke of through the mouth of all his holy prophets from the beginning." And the second Epistle of Peter is even more explicit in this teaching: "Seeing that all these things are thus dissolving, what manner of men ought ye to be, in all holy conduct and godliness; looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens being on fire will melt with burning heat." It is evident that prophecies which depend on the will of men cannot with any certainty be interpreted in advance of their fulfilment.

Fourthly, the book of Revelation, which contains the most extensive of the prophecies regarding last things, is peculiarly obscure. Whether the contents of this book refer only to the then present and impending relations of the infant church (as some hold), or to the ultimate destiny of the church and the world (which is the opinion of others), has not yet been determined by Christian scholarship. The question can probably never be solved —sufficient data for its solution are lacking. Here again a modest agnosticism is the only fitting Christian attitude.

It is well, in the study of this whole question, to bear in mind the unmistakable and realized ends of prophecy. Prophecy was given first of all for reformation of the erring. "Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate" (Jer. 44 : 4). A second end of prophecy was comfort and encouragement—"These things I have spoken to you, that in me ye may have peace" (John 16 : 33). Beyond these ends curiosity is baffled and conjecture is hazardous.

1. Of Things

(No data of any sort were left by Doctor Johnson for his discussion of this subject. It is one, apparently,

on which he had never committed his ideas to writing. The editor has the less reluctance in leaving this point entirely undiscussed, in that it appears to be relatively unimportant.)

2. Of Men

(1) The Middle State

Does death end all? Is the soul mortal, like the body? The opinion has been gaining ground, during the past generation, that man is naturally mortal, and that those to whom eternal life has not been imparted through faith in Jesus Christ suffer extinction of intelligence, affection, and will with the dissolution of the body. Paul declares that God "only hath immortality," and that it was "Jesus who destroyed death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." In other words, the doctrine of conditional immortality is thought by some to be the teaching of the Bible.

But Christian agnosticism cannot affirm so much as this. It willingly concedes that conditional immortality would solve, or help to solve, many knotty problems of theology, especially the doctrine of future punishment, if it could be shown to be taught in the Scriptures, or even to be uncontradicted by the Scriptures. But a sound exegesis will not sustain the doctrine of conditional immortality. The meaning of 1 Tim. 6 : 16 is not that God alone is exempt from death, but that God alone is self-existent, essentially deathless, and therefore all other beings depend on him for existence. But it does not follow that God will permit any spirit to be extinguished. And as to 2 Tim. 1 : 10, three meanings are possible for "life" and correspondent meanings for "death." By "life" may be meant: (1) Bare continuance of the soul's existence; (2) human entirety, the union of soul and body either in the present or in a future state;

(3) spiritual life, the holiness and happiness that befit a rational being. Only the first of these meanings refers to the immortality of the soul—a question with which pagan philosophy was seriously occupied, but which Christianity takes for granted, while it emphasizes both the resurrection and spirituality as essential to its idea of life for human beings. Christ confers both bodily and spiritual life, and confers them together. "For this is the will of my Father, that every one who beholds the Son and believes on him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up in the last day." "And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will make alive your mortal bodies also, because of his Spirit that dwells in you." Correspondingly, the death that Christ abolished is preeminently spiritual, consists in alienation from God and in misery, while the resurrection of the wicked, though real, is seldom referred to. Christianity ought not to repeat the error of paganism, which failed to see in man's deathless soul the image of God.

Conditional immortality is opposed to the testimony of consciousness, which affirms the soul to be an indivisible unit. As such it is presumably undecomposable and incapable of death. Because of this consciousness mankind has looked with instinctive unanimity for existence beyond the grave. The death of the soul has not been believed in any age or by any people. Even in the beliefs of simple savages this expectation of a future life holds a first place, but it is most suitable to the thoughtful and the holy. Universal existence of such an expectation is of deep significance to those who believe that we are creatures of One who is both good and wise, and has not implanted this hope deep in the nature of man only to disappoint it.

Nor does conditional immortality gain by making

appeal to the testimony of science, which can neither prove nor disprove natural immortality, but on the whole is distinctly favorable to it. It is true that present experience, with which alone science is concerned, gives no instance of spirit apart from body. But science unmistakably declares that while the operations of the brain and the mind are indeed parallel, they are not thinkably identical or interchangeable. The law of convertibility of energy does not apply as between mind and matter. No doubt every reader knows that physical energy of any given form is to be regarded as convertible into every other physical energy. For instance, that heat can be changed into electricity, and this into kinetic energy, the energy that causes masses of matter to move. But physical motions and acts of mind, physical energy and effort of mind, physical states and mental states, are in no case interconvertible. The grand law of correlation and conservation of force, or in briefer and more recent terms, of convertibility of energy, is inapplicable as between matter and mind.

An illustration and a test may be welcome. Push a man hard enough to lift five pounds one foot. The man notices what you do, is perhaps annoyed. Your physical energy has caused in him both thought and feeling; but the whole of the five foot-pounds of energy is taken up in producing five foot-pounds of physical results. Not the least of it is diverted into the channel of thought and feeling, although it has caused these. In other words, the energy of the push is converted into other forms of physical energy, the physical motion into other physical motions; but none of the physical motion has passed into mental movement, none of the mental energy into physical energy. A conclusive test is so certain in its result that no one will care to make the test. Weigh a child in the most delicate balance; then put a weight

with the other weights, in a way not to attract the child's notice, and mark what the index shows. Now transfer the weight to the child's hand, in a way to secure his attention to the weight, and note whether the index does not show that the weight is just as heavy as it was on the other side of the balance. Every one knows without trying that the weight will weigh the same in either case. But it would not be so if any of the energy of gravitation were converted into the child's perception of the weight. The demonstration would be complete that a physical energy is not converted into the mental result that it causes. This must be so unless the child's thought about the weight weighs something. Any one who says it does is but amusing himself; no one believes this to be really possible. The "physical equivalent of thought" is only a concomitant of thinking.

It is evident, then, that there is no such thing as mental energy. Intellectual force is not force, as science uses that term. If there were any mental energy or force, it would fall under the universal law of convertibility. But not only is this practically impossible, it is even inconceivable. All forms of physical energy can be measured; but what physical measurement can be applied to the mind?[1] Is thought long or deep? Is emotion warm or cool? Is volition fragile or tough? Physical and mental states can cause each other, but neither can pass into the other. And though within our experience mental action is always accompanied by a physical change in the brain, we do not know that mind is necessarily dependent upon the activity of the brain. Nor does the law of convertibility of force provide for the conversion

[1] A recent experiment in weighing a dying man just before death and then immediately after resulted in securing a difference in weight in favor of the former condition of about one ounce. The inference seemed to be drawn that this was the weight of the soul, and hence that it was material. Evidently we are here in the realm of agnosticism, and the simple statement of the condition destroys the conclusion. [Ed.]

of the soul into some other form of energy at death. Nevertheless, this law does suggest analogically that the soul, which is able to control the body's energies, will not itself perish with the dissolution of the body.

The Scriptures represent human beings as existing between death and the resurrection in a state of incompleteness. A body without a soul or a soul without a body is an object of natural horror. Paul desired "not to be unclothed, but clothed upon." We shall be wise to assert no more than is actually revealed concerning this intermediate state, but there is reason to believe that all souls retain consciousness. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus establishes this fact, as does Peter's reference to the "spirits in prison"; for unless they were conscious and unhappy, death would be no more a prison to them than to the righteous. In the case of the righteous the evidence of their conscious felicity is both more explicit and more abundant. Our Lord's refutation of the Sadducees turns on a proof from the law that the spirits of the holy dead are conscious before the resurrection—are in such a state that God can be God to them. The penitent robber was assured that he should that very day be with Christ where the holy are—not in that uncertain future when the Lord should come into his kingdom. For Paul to be "absent from the body" was to be "at home with the Lord." And the "strait" of which he wrote to the Philippians was between the conviction that "to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake" and his "desire to depart," not that he might pass into unconsciousness, but "to be with Christ." Perhaps the most explicit declaration that the pious dead are conscious and happy is to be found in the lofty assurance of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "But ye have come to . . . innumerable hosts, the festal assembly of angels,

and the church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men perfected."

Christian agnosticism will be slow to assert, with some theologians, that the conscious spirit, while divested of its organ, the body, will be shut out from free relations to things, and shut in to the subjects of reflection which it finds in itself and in memory. This is little more than a conjecture, and cannot pretend to be even a safe inference from anything taught in the Scriptures. Even as a matter of pure extra-scriptural speculation, quite as much might be said against it as for it. We know too little about the mode of life possible to a disembodied human soul to affirm or deny positively such an opinion. If we may infer from the relations of the angels what is possible to bodies and souls of men, capacity for external relations is entirely probable in the intermediate state.

(2) Final State

a. The Resurrection

Paul, in his incisive way, states the question to be considered: "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" The apostle's reply need not be quoted; but the whole course of discussion on this subject has shown that the reply was appropriate. At the same time it may be inferred that Paul did not so much object to the questions as to the unwillingness to believe in the fact of the resurrection if the questions about it cannot be answered. The questions ask for a theory of the resurrection; but Paul would insist upon the fact of it.

This distinction is an important one. A theory is an attempt at an inside view; it seeks to explain the nature and the working of the thing about which the theory

is offered. If a theory can be made out, it furnishes the largest extension of knowledge. But when we theorize about matters beyond our experience we attempt to explain them by things within our experience; and the explanation is bound to be consistent, otherwise the theory fails. And the risk is that we ourselves or those who listen to our theories will confound the theory with the fact, and regard insuperable objections to the theory as sufficient objections to the fact.

Christian agnosticism conclusively shows that the theories concerning the resurrection of the body are insufficient and untenable. But what is the fact concerning which these theories are offered? The New Testament plainly teaches that the dead, good and bad, shall rise. The phraseology, "the resurrection of the body," is not scriptural in terms, but expresses accurately enough the idea of the Scriptures. The body with which the dead shall rise will not be in all respects identical with the present body: "Thou sowest not that body which shall be"; but it is to have an organic relation with the present body, as "God granteth to every seed its own body." The connection is to be more than organic; it is a connection in some respects of identity, as may be gathered from the translation of Enoch and Elijah and from the ascension of our Lord, no one of whom laid aside his body—their bodies were changed. And the possibility of this kind of identity is illustrated by the fact that the materials of our own bodies continually change, while our bodies in an important sense remain the same.

The name "spiritual body" ought to be accepted as a description, not so much of the nature of the body itself as of its relations to the spirit. If we understand the name to be descriptive of the substance of the future body, then the name contains a contradiction in terms,

for spirit and body are at the opposite poles of existence and have no quality in common. We can say of them both only this, that both exist. So that if the substance of the spiritual body is spirit, the spirit has not yet a body at all. But the spiritual body is the fit instrument or organ of the spirit. It is not subject to corruption or decay, to pain, nor to death. If we knew more fully what its nature is we could declare more confidently that it occupies space; but the notion of the body itself is the notion of something that may be located.

The spiritual body will be the fit instrument of our mental activity. It is by means of the bodies we now possess that we acquire the knowledge we have of things about us, and presumably the spiritual body will be the organ to a large degree of our advancing knowledge in the future life. Some believe that as thought can speed in an instant from fixed star to fixed star, the spiritual body can move as swiftly. One would not dare affirm this to be true, but it seems safer to say that it may be true than that it cannot be true.

We understand, then, the teaching of the Bible to be that we are to have bodies, in some respects not identical, in other respects identical, with our present bodies; that the spiritual body is to be exactly adapted to the uses of the spirit, whether mental, moral, or social. including our relations to God. But if we seek a theory concerning how this body is bestowed, or what its nature is to be, our inquiry is baffled at once by the fact that we have no experience of spiritual bodies. Nor have we any other materials from which to construct a theory. We cannot draw any satisfactory conclusions as to its nature from what is related of our Lord during the period between his resurrection and ascension. Grave objections may be raised to any explanation of his condition

at that time. Of course, if we say that he retained the natural body, then we do not learn from him what the spiritual body will be. But if he had the natural body, it existed under abnormal conditions, and was maintained by miracle, for there were wounds in his hands and feet, a fatal wound in his side, and he passed at will through walls or doors.

On the other hand, there are objections to believing that he then wore the spiritual body. On this supposition two miracles are involved. But in his case the miracles are misleading. He bade his disciples notice that a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as they saw him have. But we are told that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; it is difficult, therefore, to believe that the spiritual body consisted of flesh and bones. Furthermore, he ate in their presence to convince them that he was not a spirit. But if the spiritual body is supported by food, this is because it is liable to decay, for food is taken only to make up for the inevitable wastes of our physical activity. The normal use of food positively excludes normal incorruptibility.

May we not conclude that the period between the resurrection and ascension of our Lord was a transitional period? that the processes of it were suspended processes? and that therefore the body of Christ exhibited characteristics both of the natural and of the spiritual body? The ascension from the earth completed the resurrection and was postponed only in order to assure the disciples that the resurrection was real. We are to believe that the bodies of Enoch and Elijah were transformed at their ascension. Paul teaches the Corinthians that those who are alive at the Lord's coming shall be changed; and tells the Thessalonians that they shall be caught up with the Lord in the air. The inference is easy, though one cannot speak with entire confidence, that in this case

the natural body becomes the spiritual body when the living saints are caught away from the earth. In any case we are disqualified from confidently inferring what the nature and experiences of our spiritual bodies will be, since we know so little about what were the nature and experiences of our Lord's body during the forty days.

But we must consider the more important theories that have been ventured upon this subject. And first of all, a venerable theory—which until the last one hundred years was considered as indistinguishable from the fact of the resurrection—the theory that the spiritual body will consist of materials now in our possession. Tertullian taught that the teeth are indestructible, and furnish matter enough to fit out the spiritual body. Augustine, on the other hand, taught that the spiritual body would contain all the matter that had ever belonged to our natural bodies, hair-clippings, nail-parings, and the like. Thomas Aquinas said that the body would rise just as it was laid away—stout or lean, whole or maimed. A sermon of President Stiles, of Yale, represented the atmosphere on the day of resurrection as filled with arms and legs flying from the four quarters of the earth to rejoin the bodies that had lost them. Ludicrous as the notion seems to us, it was seriously held by the college president. Unfortunately, this theory was accepted as so much a matter of course that objections to it were regarded as objections to the resurrection itself, and were so used by Thomas Paine in his "Age of Reason."

The objection is familiar to all. We know that our bodies consist of materials that may have belonged in part to other human bodies, and certainly are derived almost entirely from animals and vegetables. For instance, the carbon in our bodies is furnished, directly or indirectly, by vegetation, and vegetables obtain it

from the atmosphere. But the atmosphere derives its carbon, in part, from decaying matters, in part from the exhalations of the lungs. It may easily be the case that materials laid away in the earth should be taken up by vegetation, be eaten by men, and belong to their bodies at death. In such a case it is simply impossible that the materials that belonged to two bodies at death should belong to both of them at the resurrection.

The newspapers a few years ago circulated a story entitled, "Who ate Roger Williams?" The lot of the original settlers of Providence ran back from the water up the slope where the college now stands. Roger Williams was buried on the hillside of his home lot, and an apple tree grew on the spot. A few years ago the apple tree was removed, roots and all. It was found that one large root followed the spine, divided at the thighs, and turned up at the toes of Roger Williams. The apple tree had devoured his bones, and some one had eaten the apples. Who ate Roger Williams? The root may be seen to-day in the cabinet of Brown University.

We need only refer to the theory that bodies are never to be resumed, that spirits merely rise to judgment and are sent back to limbo. This purely rationalistic view has no support in the Bible.

The most popular of existing theories owes its popularity largely to the lecture of the late Joseph Cook, "Does Death End All?" It is the theory that we now possess, or will at death possess, a body consisting of material so ethereal, so tenuous, so refined, that it cannot decay. This theory is believed to meet the scientific objections to the consciousness of disembodied spirits in the intermediate state. It contains two elements: one that the spiritual body is to be ours at death, either because the present body is stripped away as a scaffolding

is pulled away from a complete building, or because it will be bestowed as the spirit leaves its present tenement. It is not necessary to dwell on this element in the theory, though it seems to be the natural understanding of Scripture that time elapses between death and the resurrection. We are concerned only with the pretension of this theory to construct a scientific account of the future body.

It gets its cue from ether. Now ether is a purely hypothetical substance. It is believed to exist, because some medium is necessary for the transmission unhindered of those vibrations that furnish the effects called heat and light. If light and heat are vibrations, there must be something between the earth and sun to vibrate. But the ether, according to the hypothesis, opposes no obstruction to the vibrations that pass through it. It cannot, therefore, be a storehouse of energy. If glass, for example, were perfectly transparent, if heat as well as light could pass through it unchecked, then glass could not be heated. If vegetation were not opaque, did not arrest the sunbeams, they could not cause it to glow. It is certain, therefore, that an ethereal body must be without energy. Another equally formidable objection to this theory is found in the doctrine which is the pride of modern science, the correlation of force, or the convertibility of energy. According to this doctrine every expenditure of energy is attended by the disintegration of material. You get heat from coal only by burning up the coal; you get muscular or nervous energy from your bodies only through a proportionate disintegration of muscular or nerve fiber. If then the spiritual body is to consist of materials too ethereal to disintegrate or decay, it will consist of materials too ethereal to use. It is remarkable that objections so obvious have escaped the notice of the well-informed advocates of this theory.

Only one other theory requires notice. It is based upon indisputable facts, only the facts are not available for the purposes of the theory. It appeals to the fact that the soul or spirit in man possesses an organific power, by virtue of which it gathers materials about itself and maintains the identity of the body, notwithstanding the ceaseless change of the molecules that compose the body. There is no question about the fact appealed to. But the difficulty in seeking from it an answer to the question, "How are the dead raised up?"—for the other theories attempted to answer only the question, "With what sort of a body do they come?"—is that the organific capacity of the human spirit is always exercised through an organism already in its possession. It employs the digestive function from the earliest period of fetal life, when the body consists, perhaps, of no more than a double cell, through its simple but mysterious process of assimilating surrounding material, up to the elaborate digestive functions of the human stomach. But this theory furnishes no hint as to how an entirely disembodied spirit can begin the process of equipping itself with a new body. It serves the purpose, however, of assuring us that if the organific energies of the spirit are ever again to be in operation they will construct a body essentially identical with the present body.

One or two inferences may and should be drawn from this destructive criticism of the various theories of the resurrection:

In the first place, if we attempt to construct a theory concerning things outside our experience from things within our experience, the probabilities are that our theories will be false. And if theories of the resurrection have failed, the reason is obvious. We ought not even to expect them to succeed. The attempt to construct them is an invitation of objections from infidelity, which

hereafter as heretofore, finding us ardently engaged in the defense of our theories, will accept our own construction of the matter and bring against the scriptural fact of the resurrection objections which are fatal to our theories of the resurrection. This is bad tactics on the part of Christians.

In the next place, the resurrection is beyond the reach of our understanding, not alone because it is outside our experience, but because it is greatly above our experience. Paul describes the resurrection body by terms that at once contradict all that we know, and affirm an experience far above present knowledge: "It is sown in corruption"—we have experience of that; "It is raised in incorruption"—this is far above, as well as different from our experience; "it is sown in dishonor"—the longer our possession of our bodies the larger our experience of this; "it is raised in glory"—again a contradiction of what we know by the affirmation of that which far transcends our knowledge; "it is sown in weakness"—this we know too well; "it is raised in power"—we know naught of what Paul means by power; "it is sown a natural body"—that is, a psychical body, a body fitted to the animal life in us; "it is raised a spiritual body"—that is, a body suited to a life far above any that we have yet led.

The whole of Paul's teaching is summed up in what he wrote to the Philippians: "Christ shall change the body of our humiliation and make it like unto the body of his glory." Will any one venture to affirm an adequate theory of the glorified body of our Lord? Does any one wish to do it? Can any one do it without stripping that body of its glory? Who, then, would drag down the body that he himself shall have for the sake of theorizing about it, of telling how the dead shall rise, or with what sort of body they shall come?

b. Heaven

The Bible exhausts imagery in describing the blessedness of heaven. The happiness of the righteous will probably be as varied as their capabilities. The reason for so believing is that unemployed powers are a source of discomfort, while normal activity always produces delight. The bodies of the redeemed will participate in the well-being of their souls. The resurrection restores completeness, and is an element in their satisfaction.

As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness;
I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with beholding thy form.

In every attempt to conceive the estate of the blessed the possession of the spiritual body must be taken into account. Though the subject is one of great interest to every Christian and has led to much speculation, it should be borne in mind that all we know on this subject is expressly taught in the Bible or may be reasonably inferred from such teachings. We cannot construct a good defense of the hitherto popular belief that the joys of heaven or the pains of hell will be physical. Yet we should be as much at fault if we undertook to prove them altogether spiritual. We do not even succeed, without going beyond what is written, in showing how the Father will do anything to make the righteous happy or the wicked miserable. It would seem incredible that he should be satisfied to take no part in the eternity of either the good or the bad; but when we attempt to set forth what his part will be there are so many insuperable objections to what we seem to extract from some passage of Scripture that the result is an ultra-biblical conclusion, or a reasonable willingness to remain in doubt. Some of the things that the Scriptures seem clearly to teach or fairly warrant us in believing are the following:

The spiritual body will be exempt from discomfort and decay—

> They hunger no more,
> Nor thirst any more,
> Nor does the sun fall on them,
> Nor any heat;
> Because the Lamb in the midst of the
> throne will shepherd them,
> And will lead them to fountains of
> waters of life;
> And God will wipe away every tear
> from their eyes.

Whether heaven will be a place or a state has been much debated. That it is essentially a state the Scriptures make clear, but the very idea of a body seems to involve the idea of place; and the anticipation that heaven will be a home is certainly warranted. The Lord assured his disciples: "In my Father's house are many abiding-places; if it were not so I would have told you; because I go to prepare a place for you." And Paul says: "We are of good courage, and are well pleased rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord."

The mind will be fully employed in knowing God, and in knowing all that is implied in a full knowledge of him. "For now we see through a mirror obscurely, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know fully, even as I was also fully known." So much is certain, and we may also fairly infer that the spiritual body will be the facile organ of increasing knowledge; but when we ask, In what ways? and In what measure? we are in the realm of pure conjecture.

Release from sin will be due to the full development of that sonship which is imparted in the new birth and is perfected when we see the Lord—"we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is." The redeemed

body will be the fitting organ of the redeemed soul. The senses will no longer tempt to sensuality, nor distract the attention of the mind from its proper employment, since whatever is presented to the mind in heaven will be a suitable object of notice. But this is not all; when perfection is in question, much more than deliverance from gross offenses is required. "In art," said Michael-angelo, "trifles make perfection, but perfection is no trifle." It is a physical law that the least increase in the speed of a rapid runner is secured only by greatly increased effort. Analogously it is of high moment to the spirit that bodily infirmities shall be at an end; that the spiritual body shall not falter and faint under the demands of moral energy, as so often happens now, when "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." Its healthful alacrity may even stimulate the willing spirit, and we may expect that the spiritual body will promote the holiness of heaven.

The recognition of friends in heaven is assured by the very fact of the resurrection. To have bodies is to be recognizable here and recognizable there. Only anxious affection could doubt this. The saint will know himself; it is incredible that the spiritual body will not afford him any means of making himself known. On the contrary, to have spiritual bodies, it is reasonable to believe, is to be far more recognizable than now,[1] because the spiritual body, by serving as the perfect instrument, will become the perfect mirror of the soul.

The Scriptures themselves, if they do not directly teach, at least clearly imply the fact of recognition. Their very silences are deeply significant. The Sadducees took recognition for granted in the question they put to Jesus

[1] Doctor Johnson did not always speak so confidently on this point. In another connection he says: "The only hindrance that I can foresee to mutual recognition will be that the revelation of the soul will be so complete as to be confusing. Two faces sometimes look exactly alike. They would not look alike if they were transparent windows of the soul." [Ed.]

regarding the resurrection, and Jesus took it for granted in his reply that "in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage." It would have been an obvious and a complete answer that the wife of seven husbands could not recognize any of them if this were to be the case. Social relations are clearly implied in Paul's assurance to the Thessalonian disciples: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at his coming?" "For ye are our glory and joy." Social relations of the blessed are illustrated by the fact that Moses and Elijah talked with Christ at his transfiguration, and were known by the disciples. And Paul represents love as the crowning grace of the future life, as it is of the present. But love will be the ceaseless torment of the holy, if they are never to meet and know those whom they love. So cruel and preposterous would such a disappointment be that our eager affections furnish the answer to their own question.

A doctrine of beatific vision is taught in the passages already quoted from the New Testament, and is impressively supported by the elder Scriptures. The Roman Catholic Church confidently defines the nature of the vision of God which is permitted to his saints; she holds that those who are purified from all sin behold with the spirit the essence, the attributes, and the triunity of the Godhead. But the attempts to construe the knowledge of the supreme Spirit which the blessed enjoy as different in kind from the communion that believers now have with the Father and with the Holy Spirit involves self-contradictions that become the more pronounced with every effort at precision of statement. Whether, then, the spiritual body will possess faculties by which it can discern the Father and the Spirit we cannot know, and may well doubt. But every promise of the second coming

assures us that we shall see the Lord, behold in him the glory of the Godhead and be satisfied.

c. Hell

No doctrine has been the subject of more ultra-biblical speculation than the doctrine of future punishment, and here accordingly it is most essential to discriminate sharply between what we know and what we do not know. Our only ground of knowledge is necessarily the teaching of Scripture. This plainly is that the wicked "go away into eternal punishment." The passages that establish this are both so numerous and so well known as to need no quotation. No honest exegesis can find a way of escape from this teaching.

There is undoubtedly a tendency in the preaching of our day to represent the future misery of the lost as the result, not of divine penalty, but of the natural consequences of sin. These ideas are not mutually exclusive—future misery may be both retributive and consequential. As sin does violence to the natures alike of God and man, both may co-act in punishing it. There are no doubt self-inflicted penalties of sin, but these are not therefore the only penalties. The displeasure of a man of strong and elevated character is formidable to an offender; that of God must be appalling.

> Who may abide the day of his coming?
> And who shall stand when he appeareth?

If it be a divinely established fact that sin of itself shall bring ruin upon the sinner, that result, like every other result of the divinely established arrangements, is a process of God's government, and the ruin is not the less inflicted by God because it is inflicted indirectly. On the contrary, it emphasizes the sacredness of law

that a penalty for violating it is provided for in the very constitution of things.

The idea of natural consequences should not be limited to the self-inflicted evils of sin. It seems entirely natural for God to be angry at sin, and perfectly natural for him to let some results flow from his displeasure. In fact, the constitution of the sinner provides for that very result. Our relations to God are of the highest moment to us. If we shall be able in the next life to appreciate the fact that God is angry with us, that will be worse to us than any evil that we incur in our relations, so to speak, to ourselves. Shall not God's good pleasure be fruitful of good to the holy? Will not that be an addition to the blessedness of holiness in itself? Will it not be as "natural" a result as any good that right living bestows by reaction upon the righteous? We should be sorry to recognize any "arbitrariness" in the joy that the complacency of God shall yield to those who are "accepted in the beloved"; and when conscience does its office decently, we feel that nothing at all more deserves to be called "natural" than that God should be justified when he speaks and when he condemns.

The nature of the misery of the wicked will necessarily include remorse, and naturally progressive degradation, but we are not warranted by Scripture in representing these woes as altogether spiritual. Indeed, the biblical representations of future penalty are chiefly physical. It is called the undying worm, unquenchable fire, outer darkness, everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. As literal descriptions these are mutually contradictory; they are now generally interpreted as figurative, yet essentially true. As the accounts of the physical delights of the good are not taken literally, so we need not take literally accounts of physical distress for the wicked. But the connection between the soul and

the body is so intimate, the relation between the risen body and soul will be presumably so much more intimate, that if the soul suffers, then it is most likely that the body will suffer with it. The nature and intensity of this physical suffering we cannot foresee. Scripture is silent and experience gives barely a hint.

Aside from conditional immortality, which has already been considered, no other theory of the future state has any general acceptance at the present time, as an alternative to what is above set forth as the scriptural doctrine, except the final restoration to holiness of the wicked. It outraged the moral sense to hold that the righteous and the wicked alike pass at death into a state of happiness, and the old Universalism taught by Hosea Ballou finds few advocates to-day. Instead it is admitted that the wicked must suffer the painful consequences of violating law; but suffering in a future state is believed to purge away sin; or a future probation will open the way to repentance, forgiveness, sanctification.

Many would, no doubt, accept restorationism with a sense of relief, provided only it could be shown that the Bible declares it as distinctly as the Bible now seems to them to declare the contrary. But though there is a formal appeal to Scripture, and the apparent support of a few passages is pleaded, the real appeal for support of the doctrine of final restoration is to extra-biblical sources—to sentiments supposed to be founded on or deduced from the Bible.

It is urged that eternal punishment is inconsistent with the nature of God. The divine justice will not demand, nor the divine goodness permit, the eternal punishment of offenses committed in time. But this is a very incomplete and inadequate view of the relation of the divine character to the future of the wicked. Sin is revolting alike to holiness and to love. Love equally

with holiness is supported by the penal sanctions of the law; as may be seen in the fact that God is affronted and the human heart hardened, quite as much by repelling the divine entreaties as by resisting the divine requirements. The wrath of God is directed against evil conduct as the expression and intensification of evil character. Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that eternal punishment will be inflicted for eternal sin, and for acts in time as involving eternal sin.

Again, the appeal is made to the human sentiments that have largely been fostered, if not created, by the Bible, and it is urged that the doctrine of eternal punishment is revolting; that if men really believed it they could never smile again, and that the redeemed would be miserable in heaven if they knew that the wicked were to be tormented forever in hell. But if the appeal be thus made to sentiment, the answer will not be unequivocally in favor of restorationism. The self-reproaches of the penitent must be taken into account. One who is penetrated with a deep sense of his sins heartily accepts with David the justice of any punishment that God may inflict, and owns to himself that he deserves to be cast away forever. Nor is it true that believers in eternal punishment are either insincere or insensible. We do not believe—we know—that death will one day separate us from those whom we love. Does that certainty of death mar every pleasure and spoil every tender human relationship? It is a beneficent anomaly of human nature that such beliefs, such certainties even, do not make us constantly unhappy. Even restorationists themselves are not deeply concerned about the admitted sufferings, of unknown intensity and duration, that await the wicked. As for the redeemed in heaven, they will undoubtedly accept "the judgments of Jehovah" as "true and righteous altogether." But

it does not follow that they will be indifferent to the sufferings of the lost. Pity may be as consistent with their happiness as with that of God, whose pity moved him to the sacrifice of his Son.

Once more the restorationist appeals to human experience, and urges that when the disguises of sin and the distractions of sense are swept away by death, the violence that sin does to the godlike nature of man, and the suffering that it will be found to cause, are certain to fill the sinner with horror and bring him to repentance. But experience shows that suffering is not always reformatory. "The sorrow of the world worketh death." It is entirely within the range of experience that chastisement embitters the evil-doer. Terror and distress might even be too overwhelming to be reformatory. The wicked repent not, but even blaspheme because of the pain (Rev. 16 : 9-11). And experience also emphasizes the ethical importance of the stern teachings of the Bible. The penalty adjudged is the measure of the wrong condemned. To deny the scriptural penalty for sin is to deny the scriptural estimate of the heinousness of sin. Still further, to abate at all the heinousness of sin is to subtract as much from the worth of holiness; the holiness of God will not long be regarded as supremely adorable; hunger and thirst after righteousness cannot remain the heart's deepest longing, nor the attainment of moral likeness to God be prized as the highest destiny of the redeemed.

The doctrine of a future probation, as taught in recent years by the advocates of the so-called "New Theology," does not apply to all men. It is, however, maintained that in the case of such as in this life have not had an opportunity to accept the historic Christ, the intermediate state will probably afford a probation. This opinion is justified by an appeal to 1 Peter 3 : 18-20,

and the preaching of Christ to the spirits in prison. But this passage is inconclusive, because Peter calls the spirit that testified in the prophets "the Spirit of Christ," and here he may mean the Spirit that spoke through Noah to the men of his generation. Or if Peter means that Christ after the crucifixion proclaimed the gospel to those who had been drowned in the flood he does not tell us that they were delivered from prison; still less that the gospel was preached to any antediluvian or postdiluvian sinners; least of all that it was thereafter to be offered by him to all who die without having heard it.

But there are other teachings of Scripture quite irreconcilable with this supposed teaching of Peter. Paul tells us that "as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law"; adds that this is judgment "according to my gospel"; warns us that all will "receive the things done in the body . . . whether it be good or bad"; foretells that the Lord Jesus shall render "vengeance to them that know not God (heathen), and to them that obey not the gospel" (unbelieving Jews).

If the appeal to Scripture seems to give little support to the idea of future probation, have the ultra-biblical considerations advanced in its favor any more weight? It is urged that Christ came for all; therefore all will presumably be allowed an opportunity to accept him—and *à priori* argument that, like all such arguments, is completely neutralized by a single opposing fact. It would be inconsistent, it is urged, with the compassionate love of God to condemn to eternal woe any one whose character is not unalterably fixed in wickedness; but such a state is not reached until the sinner has rejected the strongest incentives to righteousness, and these are found only in Christ. The logic of this argument would be conclusive did we not reflect how incompetent a finite

being is to judge what the infinite excellences of God lead him to do, and did we not know what mutually contradictory inferences, each logically unimpeachable, may be drawn from the nature and attributes of the infinite God. And if it is still further urged that the Christian consciousness has been trained by the Scriptures themselves to insist upon a future probation that the Scriptures do not expressly declare, the obvious and conclusive reply is that Christian consciousness cannot be confidently appealed to in support of a novel doctrine that may prove to be but a passing fancy of the times.

3. Of Christ

(1) The Second Advent

It is the plain teaching of the New Testament, and perhaps essential to the complete fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, that Christ will return in heavenly glory to the scene of his earthly humiliation. The promise to those who witnessed his ascension was: "This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven"—hence his advent will be bodily. "They shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory"—hence his advent will be visible. It will even be audible, "because the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God."

Though the advent will not be without premonitory signs ("and then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven"), it will be sudden—"therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not, the Son of man comes." It is generally agreed that this event must be preceded by a universal proclamation of the gospel —"the gospel must first be preached in all lands." Among other antecedent signs are a falling away of

nominal Christians and a revelation of Satan's power. "Let no one deceive you in any way; because that day will not come unless there come first the falling away, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

Paul also writes to the Thessalonians of the second advent as "the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God, and those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus; who will suffer justice, eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all who believe (because our testimony to you was believed), in that day." Whence it is evident that the coming of the Lord will prove to be not only an epiphany, but the overthrow of his enemies, the establishment of his kingdom, and the consummation of all things.

So much is clear regarding the teaching of the Scriptures; but whether the second advent will precede or follow a prolonged period of righteousness and peace, known as the millennium, is not clear. This was a point in dispute with the post-apostolic fathers, and has been more or less under discussion ever since their day.

Premillenarians contend that the righteous will rise "from the dead" at the coming of the Lord, and reign with him upon the earth throughout the millennium; that the general resurrection will occur at the close of the millennial period, and be followed at once by the final judgment—unless, as some hold, the millennium itself is a long judgment day.

Postmillenarians generally look for the conversion of the world as a result of the gradual spread of the gospel; hold to but one resurrection; maintain that it will attend the coming of the Lord; will take place at the close of the millennium, if any, and be immediately

followed by the last judgment, and the renewal of the earth and the heavens.

In the first age of the church, until the Apocalypse had become current, the last day was widely looked for; thereafter, up to Origen, in the third century, a premillennial reign was expected soon, notably by Montanists; from Origen until the close of the first thousand years of our era the chiliastic view was condemned, but it revived during the disorder and gloom of the Middle Ages, was rife until a thousand years had elapsed from the reign of Constantine, and was enthusiastically preached to the crusaders, who regarded Mohammed as Antichrist. In general, it has appeared in times of commotion in the world, of corruption in the church, or of oppression by either. At the Reformation it inspired the mad Anabaptists of Münster, and in the next century the Fifth Monarchy men among the English Puritans. In the United States, William Miller began in 1833 to preach the speedy second coming of Christ, and founded the sect of Second Adventists. Premillenarianism has also furnished a plea for the strangely contrasted fanaticisms of the Shakers and Mormons.

Extravagance of opinion and disorder of conduct have so commonly attended the premillenarian doctrine as to account in part for its general condemnation; but in recent years it has found advocates among sober-minded and devout exegetes of Germany, England, and America. It is often marked by zeal for a peculiar form of the missionary enterprise; its messengers hasten from village to village, announcing the gospel, but not delaying to make converts, still less to train them. It is believed that by " witnessing for Christ " to all peoples they hasten the coming of the Lord, by which alone the world can be converted.

Except during limited periods, for instance, from the

first quarter of the second to the middle of the third century, and from the tenth to the fourteenth, post-millenarianism has been the accepted doctrine of the church. Since it ascribes the future triumphs of Christ to the agencies now employed, it is congenial to the temper of the church in times of real or fancied prosperity.

The chief arguments for a premillennial advent are exegetical:

1. The book of Revelation (20 : 1-10) obviously teaches that the Lord will come and the holy rise at the opening of the thousand years.

2. If he is not to come until the close of the millennium, we cannot fulfil his oft-given command to be always watching for his advent.

3. The prophecies of the Old Testament concerning a literal kingdom of Christ upon earth, and the strong Messianic anticipations of the apostles, would not be fulfilled by a postmillennial advent.

4. The New Testament does not promise the conversion of the world under the present dispensation, but forecasts a wide growth and general decay of the church.

The arguments for postmillenialism are both exegetical and theological. On exegetical grounds it is urged:

1. The general tenor of the New Testament, with the exception of a single passage in an obscure book, the Apocalypse, is to the effect that there will be but one resurrection (John 5 : 28, 29; Acts 24 : 15), and that Christ will visibly reappear only to close the history of the earth and sit in judgment upon mankind.

2. The Apocalypse foretells the resurrection, not of all the righteous, but of the martyrs only, and that the rising and reigning of the martyrs must refer to the reanimation of the church by their spirit; as Christ said that Elijah had already come, because John the Baptist had appeared "in the spirit and power of Elijah."

3. The exhortation to expect momentarily the coming of the Lord is fulfilled by those who are constantly in readiness for manifestations of his spiritual power, for his coming to us at death, or in final judgment; it is the day of destruction which "will come as a thief," and the regeneration of the earth that attends his coming is to follow the last judgment and final catastrophe.

4. When the last enemy has been destroyed by the resurrection of the saints, Christ will at once deliver up the kingdom, and therefore cannot reign on earth after the saints rise.

On theological grounds the objections to chiliasm are:

1. It disparages the gospel by teaching that Christ can prevail only by presenting himself again to the senses.

2. It makes his kingdom a kingdom of this world, the weapons of its warfare carnal, and sets it wrestling against flesh and blood.

3. It is irreconcilable with the fact that so long as we are in the flesh it will continue expedient for us that the Lord's bodily presence should be exchanged for his spiritual presence through the mediation of the Comforter.

The postmillennial doctrine is so widely held at the present day as to be at least a quasi-orthodox position; yet even one who is wholly in sympathy with this view ought to be ready to admit that its support is largely theological. In other words, neither party has clearly made out its case. The conditions of eschatological inquiry, emphasized by the pitiful attempts to override them, forbid the hope of understanding in advance prophecies all but contradictory in terms. The signs of the times, which so often seem to portend the speedy manifestation of the Lord, may actually have that significance, and yet the impending event prove to be only one of a series, the last member of which cannot be distinguished until it arrives. Thus, as John said, that "even now

have arisen many Antichrists," so since that day any conspicuous opponent of Christ may be a prophesied Antichrist, and yet not the final embodiment of Satan's rage.

Of one thing we may be assured: that Christ will come and fulfil the prayers of his church. Meanwhile the duty of the faithful is to be "like unto men waiting for their Lord."

(2) Ultimate Subjection

(Here again Doctor Johnson left no hints beyond a few scattered sentences of what his treatment of this part of his theme would be.—EDITOR.)

VIII

THE MODUS VIVENDI

VIII

THE MODUS VIVENDI

1. Biblical Criticism

THERE is one doctrine that embraces all that we know and do not know of distinctively Christian truth, and this is the doctrine of sacred Scripture. If the book furnishes most of the answers, the book itself is most in question. But it does furnish the answers. Those who sought them in nature, in history, in Christian consciousness, in "judgments of worth" rather than in the Bible, have found them at last, if at all, in the Bible. Still, the Bible is not a collection of theorems, much less of theories. Its doctrines were written because they bear on life. They describe life. This was the way with Jesus. He was to his followers what he claimed to be—the way, the truth, the life. They "so learned Christ." They came to the Father by him. They saw him, and saw the Father also. The matter stands thus: on the one hand is every alarming question which criticism raises, and cannot finally answer, about the writers and the writing of the Book; on the other hand, experience guarantees that its main contents are true.

Confidence here must neither rely on bold assertion nor be shaken by bold denial. Especially when we appeal to those transactions within our own minds which we call religious experiences must we be discriminating as to their nature and accurate as to their implications. To make our claims, at least, as explicit as possible the following points are affirmed: First, the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity can be traced to the Apostle Paul; secondly, Paul believed that he had historical

knowledge of the fundamental Christian facts; thirdly, Paul experienced the spiritual fruitage of such facts; fourthly, the doctrine of the other New Testament writings is to the same effect as that of Paul's acknowledged writings; fifthly, spiritual men from that day have experienced the same fruitage of the same fundamental Christian facts; sixthly, this experience is an indispensable and also a sufficient attestation to the historically assured facts and to the spiritual verities of Christianity.

First, Christian agnosticism alleges that Paul knew and set forth experimental Christianity. Let us not miss the momentous nature of this assertion. The scheme of doctrines with which Christian experience has been busy was furnished by Paul. Paul's Christ is the Christ of Christendom, and Paul's account of Christ's mission is the church's account.

Secondly, Christian agnosticism holds that the doctrines of Paul interpreted what he believed to be historical facts. The facts so interpreted were: Christ divine, Christ crucified, Christ risen. As to Paul's belief regarding the virgin birth, it is sufficient to compare Gal. 4 : 4 with Luke's expansion of the same thought into the narrative of the Annunciation (1 : 26-38).

Thirdly, it further holds that in accepting the historical data, Paul embraced them as spiritual realities. They were events with a purpose, and that purpose was realized in him. He could have cited to his day the historical evidence for all the facts, had this been necessary; and he did cite the historical evidence for the only fact that needed attestation, the all-attesting fact of our Lord's resurrection; but what did this objective evidence weigh with Paul himself, in comparison with that other evidence: "It pleased God to reveal his Son in me." It was the application of the facts to their spiritual purpose which was the revelation of those facts in him. How the objective

facts became subjective realities can be easily seen in the explicit and ample account which the apostle has left of what plain people would call his "religious experiences." To speak far within the bounds, he had learned by some means that Jesus was in some sense divine. For a man of intensity so prodigious, for a man so wrapped up in the religious significance of life, all Paul's knowledge "according to the flesh" was dwarfed by the fact that Jesus was the Son of God. How much this meant to him we may know from what he wrote to the Philippians, or what some one else accurately wrote in his name: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord." Is there any such thing as living a truth like the divinity of our Lord, and did not Paul live it?

How, then, the crucifixion must have measured up to Paul. Conceive with what astonishment he conceived the death of Christ as a sacrifice for human sin. Make every allowance for judicial notions naturalized in his mind by citizenship in a Roman colony; discount as heavily as one can his Levitical preconceptions about sacrifices; only do not overlook the Jewish horror of human sacrifices, and the certainty that the sacrifice of Jesus was tolerated by Paul, Hebrew of the Hebrews, only because it was the self-sacrifice of the divine; and when you have tossed away all the old clothes that can be stripped from Paul, if indeed you have foreborne to pitch Paul himself out o' window, and when you look for the naked Pauline truth, what do you see but Christ stripped of his garments and hanging on a tree? Could Paul say of it less than he said, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"? Was it an overstatement that followed: "By him the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world"?

If, then, the crucified Christ was to Paul an experienced

reality, what was the risen Christ? The cross pales before the resurrection. If the question with our apostle is that radical and all but final question, How shall a man be just with God? even for answer to this question the resurrection figures above the crucifixion. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again." Nor is this the last word; the risen Christ is "even at the right hand of God," and is making intercession for us. This is to answer the question: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" We are not even yet at the end of what Paul found in the rising of his Lord. We were in sins, and God "hath quickened us together with Christ." God raised up his Son, but he "raised us up with him." He placed his Son on his throne, but he has "made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Our citizenship, like that of Christ himself, is in heaven, and there, where Christ sits at the right hand of God, our affections ought to be set. And why? Because "we are risen with Christ." This was Paul's experience of Christ's resurrection. In a word, for him "to live was Christ."

Fourthly, Christian agnosticism finds the other books of the New Testament to the same effect as Paul's writings. They all make account of the same essential facts, and recognize the same significance in the facts. The questioned Pauline Epistles do not construe the case otherwise than do the unquestioned. Not when that to the Colossians, with the widest sweep taken by New Testament thought, lays for the atonement a foundation broad as the cosmos, deep as the immanence of the universe in the preincarnate Son, and claims that the incarnated Son wrought a cosmic peace, a cosmic reconciliation, not even then does this Epistle other than expatiate

upon the deliverance for which Paul told the Romans that the "whole creation groans," and by which the creation itself shall pass from "the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." The calm elaboration of the Epistle to the Hebrews but vindicates the impetuous claims of the letter to the Galatians, and shows how by one atonement there comes to us that "righteousness of God," for the classic exposition of which we must look to the third chapter of the letter to the Romans.

Not even the synoptists, so simple and untheological, omit the teachings that Paul characteristically unfolds. It is the synoptists Matthew and Mark who tell us of the ransom which Christ must provide, and the synoptist Luke who says that remission of sins should be preached in the name of Him who died and rose. The synoptists do not fall short, and the evangel of John does not go beyond what Paul found Christ was to us, even though Paul never called his preincarnate Lord the Logos, nor perhaps ever thought of him as such, for Paul taught his Corinthians that "unto us there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." Or if John's greatest Epistle declares wherein love is, "not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," Paul's greatest Epistle quite as appealingly lays it down that "God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

It must be confessed that orthodox theology has not emphasized knowledge as Jesus did. We would not have ventured to say what Jesus said, and now hardly venture to say it after him: "This is eternal life to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou didst send." Orthodoxy stands by Paul's word, "Knowledge puffeth up"; yet it is not Paul's

fault that this is all we know about knowledge; for in words as strong as those of his Master he wrote, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord"; and the climax of his prayer for the Ephesian disciples was, "That ye may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God." Not even John's distinctive doctrine of life in Christ surpasses the experienced reality that Paul announced to the Galatians in the boldest paradox of the New Testament: "I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me." The relative certainty and the relative significance which the New Testament writers found in external and internal knowledge, in facts historical and facts spiritual, in matters of intelligent observation and matters of Christian experience, Paul fully declares for them all when he writes: "Even if we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." Christian agnosticism sees that—

Fifthly, the primal Christian facts have been facts of Christian experience for all the immediate and all the later followers of our Lord's apostles. Faith so began. That in their day it was working so happily we have express statements from the founders of the faith themselves. The Corinthian disciples did not accept Paul's teachings on the basis of his authority, but they accepted his authority on the basis of his teachings. "By manifestation of the truth he commended himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." These disciples in turn won others in the same way. When they prophesied, if there came in one who did not believe with them, who did not even know what they believed, he was "convinced of all, he was judged of all; and thus were the

secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he worshiped God, and reported that God was in them of a truth." Jesus said that his own truths were accepted because self-attested to the obedient. "I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me, . . and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from thee, and have believed that thou didst send me." Just a few moments earlier the disciples acknowledged, with a sudden burst of confidence all but touched with absurdity, that their minds worked quite in this way. Jesus had tersely declared the four great facts about himself, his divine origin, his mission, his pending sacrifice, his ascension. "I came forth from the Father, and came into the world; again, I leave the world and go unto the Father." At once his disciples, hitherto perplexed and pained by what he had been saying, seize with avidity this clear exposition of the whole case, and reply: "Lo, now thou speakest plainly. . . Now we know that thou knowest all things. . . By this we believe that thou camest forth from God." After their experience of Jesus it needed but his own perspicuous word to clear up all that could then be made clear. That word was the grain of sand which threw down the precipitate that their minds had held in unperceived solution. The assurance which thus began, often as it has needed enlargement and correction, has been enjoyed by all Christians, on the same ground, until this day. Thus the Corinthians were Paul's epistle, and all good Christians are Christ's own epistle, known and read of all men.

Christian agnosticism, then, affirms that Paul, in the first instance, knew both historically and experientially

what we also in both ways know, to wit, the great Christian realities. The slow centuries since his day weaken indeed the historical evidence which can be found in Christian tradition; but the evidence from experience is strengthened with every millennium, every century, every generation, every individual believer. We may even say that while an ordinary man has not insight enough, either native or specially bestowed, to discover the spiritual realities that Paul and John long ago beheld and lived in, they saw them for us, showed them to us, and we, according to our measure, live in them as they did. We need not be great poets in order to appreciate great poetry. We need not be discoverers of a new world of truth, but we can settle in the new world, and generations of our like have already made it their familiar home. We do not, then, lapse into the hopeless yet defiant agnosticism of Professor Huxley, and pronounce that no one can find out whether the New Testament tells the truth. We may not think it pleasant or even feel it safe to pitch our tents with adventurous Ritschl in the unstable fields of air, with him to take philosopher Kant for our authoritative Paul, and colleague Lotze for our brotherly John, to bow to the critical judgment of the one that we cannot really know God or any spiritual thing at all, and fall in with the value-judgment of the other that we as good as know what we find is good for us; in a word, speaking for Christian folk in general, we cannot permanently reconcile ourselves to the gospel of make-believe, be the apostle of it scholarly and sardonic as Harnack, speculative as Kaftan, spiritual as Hermann, or quite so determined a character as Ritschl himself. But we may claim to know the facts which our experience has attested. We think we know them at the outset with a high degree of certitude historically, from without inward; then, secondly and

definitively, we know them experientially, from within outward. The historical reality ever looks toward the experiential, for the sake of which it exists; and the experiential reality never loses sight of the historical, on which it depends.

There is a school with doors open to all; but the fees are high, and no one should set his heart on graduating too young. It is the school of experience. What is taught there is taught with authority, and what the scholars learn there they believe as they believe no other teaching. Every great truth of our religion is so taught, and only when so taught is held fast against all odds and forever. Christian agnosticism, while it will not pretend to know what cannot be known, insists that we veritably know whatever is unequivocally taught by Christian experience; because—

Sixthly, spiritual experience is the proper method of knowing those historical realities the whole significance of which is spiritual. This does not mean that an exclusively internal experience can prove external occurrences. Without historical testimony to Christ it would be sheer superstition to ascribe benefits to him. But this is not the issue. We have at least a tradition of Christ. Now tradition is competent to preserve the memory of a sufficiently notable personage, and to remember why he is notable. It is by tradition that we one and all came to know of our Washington, our Columbus, our Mohammed, and our Julius Cæsar. It is tradition in the forming of it which taught us a few years ago about a Lincoln and a Lee; and tradition is thus far all we have for it, very likely all the most of us will ever have for it, that a president of the United States has been elected or reelected. For tradition is a word passed along; whether it goes by voice or by pen, as Paul said to the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 2 : 15), is all one. The

Christian tradition is kept alive by an organization of men and women, and every human organization can give some trustworthy account of why it exists. Further, the continuity of the tradition about Jesus is copiously certified by the literature of the Christian centuries. In every century it has been checked by the New Testament, which, in its turn, was a record so early that in it, as in histories of our own times, chronic tradition is resolved back into contemporaneous rumor. There is no question that Jesus lived and died; the question is, did he rise? and when he died was it to give his life a ransom? But these are questions which subjective evidence is able to answer in favor of the faithful tradition. We have seen that Paul found in the cross an expiation, and in the resurrection an upspringing of life. Unbroken experience from his day to ours is to the same effect. And thus it comes about that facts so transcendental as the deity of Christ, and atonement by his passion and his rising become facts of experience in the lives of Christian men.

A little consideration will make it plain that the Christian facts of incarnation, sacrifice, and resurrection could not be believed unless attested by spiritual results. If these provisions were made by God's grace, it was solely for the ends that they provided for. If there were no Christian fruits, there were no Christian facts; if no results, then no causes. Whatever, therefore, the historical basis of Christianity, and an historical basis is indispensable, it is to religious experience that we must look for the ultimate demonstration. A valid religious experience is not only the proof most germane to the nature of Christianity, but apart from it no other proof has the smallest value. Transactions in essence so spiritual as the death and resurrection of the Son of God can have no other so fit attestation, and no other real attestation,

except that in the death of Christ we die to sin, and in the resurrection of Christ we rise to newness of life. This is why the horrifying denunciation of the Epistle to the Hebrews against the deliberate sins of believers is quite just. Sinning on their part testifies that Jesus died to no purpose, and denies that he rose. And so of believers that live in sin, it was fitting to write that they "trample under foot the Son of God."

The force of conviction wrought by experience ought not to seem mysterious or dubious. Experience is contact with reality. If there is reality in Christ, contact must find that reality. But when we experience Christ we find him precisely fitted to us. He turns out to be our complement, our completeness, the other part of ourselves, and he makes the worst in us become the best in us. It is much in this way that the moral argument for the existence of God has so got the upper hand over all sorts of agnostics. Not even Stuart Mill could make us agree to flout this argument as amounting only to a belief that that exists which we would like to have exist. Kant, who taught the modern age its agnosticism, taught it also its faith in at least an unknown God. He would not have it that sane sense, practical reason, can consent to the permanent misery of the righteous. To be righteous is, he insisted, the supreme good; but that the righteous should in the end be happy, this he held, and all agree, is the highest good, a good that conscience says must be. And so there must be a God to look to it and to make all sure. Well may we feel our dependence on him, as Schleiermacher said we ought. Well may we worship him when we stand before his incomprehensible majesty, as Herbert Spencer said all good men do, until at length there are few souls so poor in faith as not to have found out that their faith is a good moral certificate of theism, current in all civilized markets, and

accepted in the great clearing-house of social evolution. The appetencies of the soul testify to the existence of that which satisfies them, precisely as the persistence of the body's appetites proves the existence of their food.

2. Facts for Faith

The Christian facts, among the facts of all religions, have the special advantage that they are so specific, and so variously fit to man as to enjoy a manifold experiential demonstration which cannot be claimed in favor of any ethnic faith. Actually we are theists because we first are Christians. The home of our faith is like those audacities of modern architecture, the steel-framed buildings which thrust their slender skeletons into the upper air, and sometimes, in mockery of old ways, carry in their topmost stories a brick and stone casing, while all below is open to every storm. Does this mean that there is no foundation? Does it not mean that the foundation is solid and the framework strong? The towering faith of the church is found securer the loftier it is; and up there is the sweetest and wholesomest place to live. Christianity's hidden basis of theism is approved by the weight it has to carry. The church has its own perennial "judgments of worth"; and so the historic faith bears the test which Ritschlianism prescribes, and by that very test assures us of what Ritschlianism timidly renounces, namely, its facts for faith. We have experienced the exalted benefits of the Christian faith. Those benefits have accrued, not when we lowered the pretensions of Christianity to make faith easy; not when we let Christ down to put him within reach of secularized souls; not when we sought perhaps to win influence for ourselves by disclaiming any opinion that could make the cross offensive. When we claimed most for Christ, then were men most eager for him. When we found highest value

in his death, then were they least willing to miss what the cross affords. When we gloried in the cross, then we too were crucified, and in sharing the dying of the Lord Jesus shared the power of his resurrection.

A summary of what we may claim to know concerning the contents of the New Testament is as follows: Paul is a historical personage. His veracity is undisputed. The Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians are admitted to be his. These Epistles state Paul's conviction that Jesus was divine as well as human; that the crucifixion was a piacular sacrifice, the resurrection real and redemptive. Paul gives his reasons for believing in the fact of the resurrection, and they remain to this day unrefuted. But not only does he set forth the great fundamental Christian facts; he also shows that they accomplished their redemptive purpose in him. The other books of the New Testament testify to the same historical facts, the same redemptive purpose, the same experience of redemption. The New Testament thus attests the facts both historically and experientially. But Christian tradition, from the apostolic age to ours, is a parallel source of information. Tradition has preserved the memory of Christ and of the estimate in which he was originally held. That it has done so we know from the Christian literature of all generations back to the generation that overlapped in part the apostolic age. Indisputably Christians have always held that Christ was divine, that he died for sins, and rose to consummate his mission. Tradition testifies also to the experience of redemption by believers. Tradition has continued at second hand the historical record of the New Testament, and has repeated at first hand the New Testament record of Christ's achievements within us. In other words, both the New Testament and tradition certify the claims of Christianity, both

historically and experientially. Of these two kinds of evidence it is, in point of fact, the moral impressiveness of Christian experience which has wrought conviction. It is Christian experience that has secured the acceptance of the historic facts. The number of persons who have been argued into accepting Christ is so small that very likely there is not one such person in the whole round of our acquaintance.

In view of this irresistible confirmation of Holy Writ, faith does not require that the questions raised by New Testament criticism be definitively answered, and does not absolutely insist that the traditional answer, however gratifying, be provisionally held. This is Christian agnosticism at the most critical point; but though agnosticism, it is Christian. We can afford to be agnostic as well as believing. We have experienced the fundamental verities of the Bible, but we cannot answer the current questions about the Bible. We may never be able to answer them. We do not need to answer; we can bear to leave them open. We dare not force an answer. Because we are able to say "I know," we can add without fear and without shame, "I know not." If the Gospel called John's gives a true account of the transcendent Jesus, what does it matter whether it was written by John the apostle or by presbyter John, or by neither? Whoever drew its living picture knew the Christ as no other evangelist knew him. And what vital concern then hangs on the question by whom or how the Gospels were written? Luke says, in effect, that his Gospel is a compilation of sifted traditions. Does it the less enchain our faith? What matter who wrote the first great Epistle called John's? The end he wrote for he gained; with him we have fellowship with the Father; we know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son, Jesus Christ. This

God is the true God, and to know him and be in him is eternal life.

To the Christian agnostic the problems of criticism are not problems of faith. It is full time to see and proclaim this. Christian agnosticism is the radical cure for doubt. Faint-heartedness and dismay about the Bible are the penalty for overweening confidence that nothing is to be learned or unlearned about the doctrine of sacred Scripture. For those of us who will not be either foolhardy or chicken-hearted, although our individual experience of the Christian realities may be small, for us is the heirship of all the Christian ages. It pleased God to reveal his Son to us in Paul, and in all who have followed Paul as he followed Christ. We may surely go with Thomas too; because we know far more than he knew, and have a right that he never dreamed of to worship Christ and say, "My Lord and my God."

We began by discovering that what we know best we know least; we end by seeing that what we know least we know best. The net outcome for our day of Kant's reliance upon "Practical Reason," of Schleiermacher's "Appeal to Christian Consciousness," of Ritschl's "Confession of Worth-judgments," is twofold: We have learned by experience that the essential content of the Christian Scriptures is veracious; and while this fact raises a strong presumption in favor of the traditional account of their origin, it enables us without uneasiness to leave the settlement of this problem to Christian scholarship.

A Christian agnosticism is Christian gnosis, and a Christian gnosis is Christian agnosticism.

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